

A glimpse into-

**THE
SUPREME
SCIENCE
OF THE
BUDDHA**

BY Egerton C. Baptist

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BY
EGERTON C. BAPTIST

With an Introduction by
Venerable Nārada Mahā Thera
(of Vajirārāma, Ceylon)

and a Foreword by
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***'Let a man of intelligence come to me, who is honest,
candid, straightforward - I will instruct him,
I will teach him the Norm',***

**said the Supreme Buddha 2,500 years ago.
(Udumbarika-Sihanada Sutta).**

**In the same spirit may Western people
seeking Wisdom find their
Liberation.**

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Foreword	3
Preface	7
Chapter I The Theists and Science	11
Chapter II A Supreme Buddha Arises In the world	22
Chapter III The Buddha's Main Teachings	26
Chapter IV Kamma and the Life-flux-Santati	41
Chapter V Can We Believe in Re-birth?	54
Chapter VI Buddhism and Science	58
Chapter VII Buddhism Solves the Riddle of Life	67

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“SABBA DĀNAṂ DHAMMA DĀNAṂ JINĀTI”

“The gift of truth excels all other gifts.”

"The Supreme Science of the Buddha"

is sponsored by

Tan Jiak Koon Janet

to wish her friend

Lim Moi Hua

a speedy recovery.

May the Blessings of the Triple-Gem be with her.

Ven. Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero

Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre

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12.4.1999

**SABBA DĀNAṀ DHAMMA DĀNAṀ JINĀTI
SABBAṀ RASAṀ DHAMMA RASAṀ JINĀTHI
SABBAṀ RATHIṀ DHAMMA RATHIṀ JINĀTI
TANHAKKHAYO SABBA DUKKHAṀ JINĀTI**

The gift of truth excels all other gifts. The flavours of Truth excels all other flavours. The pleasure in truth excels all other pleasure. He who has destroyed craving overcomes all sorrow.

(Dhammapada 354)

Three kinds of gifts are mentioned in Buddhism, namely

- i. **Āmisa Dāna** - the gift of material things
- ii. **Abhaya Dāna** - the gift of life
- iii. **Dhamma Dāna** - the gift of Truth

Āmisa Dāna - the gift of material things is practised by people of all religions, and is very common. Food, clothes and houses are given to people of little means or to refugees through various religious and social organizations. It is, no doubt, a good thing to satisfy the hunger of the starves and the thirst of the thirsty. This type of donation is highly recommended in Buddhism.

Abhaya Dāna - the giving of life to those who are endangered by fire, water, enemies etc. Sometimes we hear of people who are about to die due to lack of blood. To donate blood and save a human life is, indeed, a great thing. Donation of eyes and kidneys is also highly appreciated, and that too comes under **Abhaya Dāna**.

Finally, **Dhamma Dāna** - the gift of Truth is said to be the highest of all donations on earth. It is the act of teaching and explaining the Doctrine to the people and lead them away from the wrong path. It is also the teaching of what is moral and immoral, the organization

of discussions and seminars on the Dhamma and the writing and printing of literary works on associated themes and the establishment of reading centres for the propagation of the Buddha's Word.

One may provide all the disciples of the Buddha with the four requisites - food, raiment, medical facilities and shelter, in the best possible way, or provide the lay people all their material requirements. But to enlighten on the Dhamma with a stanza of only four lines is said to be the best and the highest of all other donations. Rare are the people who can preach and enlighten the listeners and convince them. Hence books written on the Dhamma play a very important role in the dissemination of the Word of the Buddha.

Today books written on Buddhism are not freely available to the readers. They are priced so high that it is beyond one's means to obtain even one of them. To eliminate this difficulty, our Society has undertaken the printing of books written by well known scholarly writers on Buddhism. We have already printed more than two hundred and twenty books. Most of them were printed to commemorate near and dear departed ones and are freely available to those who are interested in Buddhism. The most common custom of the day regarding the dead is to relic the ashes and build monuments, or to give alms on their behalf to monks and charitable organizations. As mentioned earlier, these become secondary to the gift of Truth. If anybody wishes to respect the departed ones by imparting the knowledge of the Truth, we would like to extend our co-operation. We have already selected some valuable books to be printed. Those who are interested in getting them printed with a photograph of their departed ones can contact the Religious Adviser of the Singapore Buddhist Meditation Centre.

Further inquiries are welcome. Please call Tel: Ven. W. Sarada
Maha Thero Tel: 7783330

INTRODUCTION

By

The Venerable Narada Maha-Thera

Buddhism is a moral and philosophical system which appeals both to the masses and the intelligentsia.

As Buddhism emphasises the importance of practice and self-realization it is not a mere philosophy which deals with speculations and theories. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the Buddha has forestalled many a philosopher.

Buddhism teaches a psychology without a psyche. When Professor James referred to a stream of consciousness and remarked that 'thoughts themselves are the thinkers' he was echoing the Buddhist doctrine of Anatta, the crux of Buddhism, in his own words.

Apart from mind and matter, the constituents of this so-called being, there is no permanent soul either emanating from a Universal Soul or created by a God.

The Buddha denied the fundamental teachings of most religions, based on the fear of the unknown and on blind faith. He expounded a rational and tolerant teaching that could be tested and verified by personal experience. To its unique credit it should be said that throughout its peaceful march of 2,500 years not a drop of blood was shed to propagate the peaceful message of the Buddha.

Metta or boundless loving-kindness that binds all as fellow-beings, irrespective of creed, colour, race, or sex, has always been the guiding principle of all Buddhists. This war-weary restless world that has almost reached the zenith of material progress ignoring all

spiritual values, that has prostituted science to cause indescribable suffering to millions, that has sacrificed the most precious thing on earth-life- at the altar of brute force, is greatly in need of this universal loving-kindness which is the only non-aggressive antidote to the powerful alphabetical bombs of this chaotic atomic age.

In this little book Mr. Egerton Baptist, a Buddhist by conviction, has made a humble attempt to present some of the fundamental teachings of the compassionate Buddha to seekers of truth. He is to be congratulated on his noble endeavour to propagate the sublime teachings of Buddhism which are diametrically opposed to the fundamental tenets of Christianity, his ancestral religion.

Vajirarama,
Colombo, 28th June, 1955.

FOREWORD

By

Dr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz

Author of 'The Tibetan Book of the Dead', etc

This small but precious treatise, on the scientific aspect of Buddhism in relation to modern developments in the realm of Western Science, may well prove to be a forerunning herald of awakening for a planet hypnotically immersed in the sleep of ignorance. As it was among the Mediterranean people when the Roman Empire was falling, so it is today in Europe and America. Occidental mankind have lost that enthusiasm of their pioneer forefathers without which no social order, religious faith, or cultural heritage can long endure. The dreams of a generation now almost extinct have not been realized. The promises of the machine age and of a once boastful technology have failed, and instead of a prophesied era of triumphant and joyous living, there is dark despondency and bitter disillusionment. And precisely as the Mediterranean people when Rome was falling looked for deliverance by means of a prayed-for extra-terrestrial saviour rather than by means of self-directed effort, so do the people of the Occident look for their own deliverance now.

Western scientists have sought and in some encouraging and not unimportant measure have found truth, not in their inherited theology, but in their laboratories and test-tubes and by means of their mathematics and microscopes and telescopes. But, unfortunately, unlike their brethren in Asia, they have been content to study effects rather than causes, phenomena rather than noumena. Nevertheless, although limited in outlook and understanding, they, as Mr. Baptist very rightly emphasizes, approached closer and closer to the Supreme Science of the Buddha.

I perceive, as Mr. Baptist does, that the failure of the West to advance culturally rather than utilitarianly has been due to lack of Right Guidance. Instead of the Right Knowing, or Gnostic, and Esoteric, Doctrine of the Christos, the West has been taught, exoterically and vulgarly, to believe in an anthropomorphic deity full of vengeance and jealous of all other deities and as much an advocate of human warfare as are his worshippers, and in a personal immortal self, or 'Soul', and in a one incarnation sojourn on Earth followed by transference to an eternal heaven of blissfulness for the elect or to a state of never-ending torture called hell for the damned.

Had Right Christianity prevailed in Europe and America the two world wars would never have been fought. Nor would there have been need for missionaries to go from the nations of the west to Ceylon or to any other Buddhist land, for, as I made clear in my controversy with the missionaries of Church-Council Christianity in Ceylon more than thirty years ago, Right Christianity, like Buddhism, is based upon the fundamental and scientifically-tenable doctrines of **Kamma** and Rebirth, which, I am glad to observe, Mr. Baptist has expounded in an altogether new and fascinating way.

There is in the West at the present time a remarkable revival, emotional rather than intellectual, of that form of exoteric Christianity which commonly opposes, in an unscholarly and untenable manner, as its missionaries in Ceylon do, the doctrines of **Kamma** and Rebirth. This revival is, in large degree, the outcome of the fear-obsession of the occidental people. After two world-wars have destroyed their over-lordship of the Earth and their scientists have discovered means for national and all-world suicide, they grasp the old dogmatism in desperation, as though it were a life-preserver

afloat in a storm-tossed sea. Buddhism is, as yet, too little known in the Occident to be, as it otherwise could be, the efficient means of restoring confidence to the bewildered and error-fettered people.

Monasticism, which in all known ages and faiths has ever afforded the disillusioned an easy escape from a disordered society, is, like the revival, also enjoying such precipitate prosperity that there are today three times as many Roman Catholic renunciates in the United States alone as there were fifty-five years ago. This, too, parallels a like condition which prevailed in the days of the disintegrating Empire of Rome.

Oswald Spengler may yet prove to have been a true seer when he wrote *The Decline of the West*. At all events, when the course of empire on its western way shall have crossed the Pacific and reached India and Ceylon and so completed the circuit of the planet, as, of yore, there will dawn a truly New Age; and a Federated World will be in the enjoyment of that Right Guidance to which this small volume refers and which all the Buddhas since prehistoric times have made available to mankind. Only then will the race of men be restored to sanity, economically, politically, and psychically.

Valuable for all who seek Right Understanding is Mr. Baptist's praiseworthy dethronement of the anthropomorphic God of the *Bible* in Chapter I. The next two chapters contain an excellent outline account of the life and chief teachings of the Buddha. Then, in Chapters IV and V, is set forth one of the best exposition available of Kamma and Rebirth. In his treatment of Buddhism and Science, in Chapter VI, Mr. Baptist shows deep insight and originality; and, in Chapter VII, he expounds convincingly how Buddhism solves the riddle of life.

Once a communicant of the Church of Rome, Mr. Baptist has, in virtue of intense search and meditation, arrived at the sound conviction that Church-Council Christianity is not, as I made clear to the people of Ceylon during the Rebirth Controversy, Right Christianity. And, in the wondrous and scientific teachings of the Enlightened One, he has discovered the Port of Self-Realization and Self-Salvation, having left far behind, as being of no further use on the Voyage to the Other Shore, the Port of Salvation by Faith.

May those Great Ones who assist mankind in the aeon long journey, vouchsafe their blessings in this book, and empower its author, for many years to come, to continue his services on behalf of his brethren seeking to emerge from the mist-enshrouded valleys and attain the sun illuminated Heights.

San Diego, California,
Vaisakha, 1955

PREFACE

The purpose of this work is to commemorate the **Sambuddha-Jayanti** - the 2,500th year of the Supreme Buddha's **Pari-Nibbāna**.

The seed from which this little book has sprung, however, was planted in the columns of the Ceylon Observer, a Lake House Journal, wherein I initiated a controversy in good humour on the existence or non-existence of God. A storm broke out in the press, and when calm was restored my good friend Prema de Silva suggested that I might suitably adapt and present the main arguments of that controversy for analysis by thinking men in the West who had not heard of the Buddha Dhamma, and who, as Dr. Evans-Wentz aptly remarks in his Foreword, have been studying for long 'phenomena rather than noumena'.

In a time when the world is torn between conflicting ideologies, when primitive beliefs are torn from their foundations, when men despair, the Message of the Supreme Buddha stands like a mighty Rock unshaken by the challenge of this Atomic Age. His Message, neither added to nor subtracted from, holds true today as it did 2,500 years ago. Its appeal is not to emotion, but to the intelligence of all thinking men and women the world over.

May this little book play its modest part in promoting knowledge of the Sublime Buddha Dhamma wherever the English language is spoken, especially among our brothers and sisters across the seas in that great land of freedom, the United States of America.

My thanks are due to the Venerable Narada, Maha Thera, for

having kindly written the introduction to this book. Like Bodhisattas of old, sacrificing his own opportunities of emancipation, he has taken the Message of the Dhamma to the four corners of the world. Were it not for his efforts to spread Enlightenment, far and wide, many would still be languishing in a backyard of ignorance. But his work has not been sufficiently appreciated, and it is a privilege for me to pay him this tribute. To those whose interest is aroused by this little book to go deeper into the subject and make a fairly comprehensive study of the pure unadulterated teachings of the Buddha as found in the **Therāvada** schools of Ceylon, Burma and Siam, I can do no better than recommend the Venerable Mahā Thera's own book, *The Buddha Dhamma*. It is one of the finest books ever written on the Buddha Dhamma.

To Dr. Evans-Wentz, I am deeply indebted for his very encouraging and illuminating Foreword. Hailing as he does from America, and himself a profound and independent thinker, his appeal to the West to study not only the original teachings of Jesus, but the Sublime Doctrines of the Blessed One, would, no doubt, not fall on deaf ears.

Mr. Dharmapriya Mahinda, Proctor, Supreme Court, of Panadura, has kindly met the costs of printing. His Response to my appeal was immediate and spontaneous and was at a time I had almost despaired of ever being able to place the manuscript in the Printers' hands. I offer to him my sincere thanks for his generosity. May his tireless efforts in the cause of the Dhamma, when his work is done, bring him the peace of **Nibbāna**, which he so richly deserves.

A meed of praise is due to a very young friend, Denzil Dissanayake, still a student, who sought my help and guidance in an endeavour

to understand some of the deeper teachings of the Buddha. His contact with me, was like the erupting of a volcano that had long been smouldering. With rare intelligence and equally rare sincerity, he set to work questioning and cross-questioning me on many human problems that had earlier eluded his comprehension. For, like most born-Buddhists he too had little appreciation of the Sublime Buddha Dhamma. But, now, through conviction, he feels that through a study of Buddhism, he would be able 'to get reason out of the mass of incongruity we call human life'. There is every hope that he would some day blossom forth into a worthy apostle of the Sublime Teaching. I need hardly add that his persistent questioning helped me in no small measure to make many of my own views clearer to the average reader.

I also thank my good friend Alec Robertson for reading the proofs for me. He has followed my every footstep so sincerely and zealously that I have now come to regard him as a **Kalyānamithra** (a genuine friend of abiding sincerity on the path to emancipation). My deep conviction is that we have often been together, through the ups and downs of life in previous incarnations.

For myself no praise is sought. Fame and glory are cherished only by the foolish. For, even if one were to rule a kingdom today, there is the ever grim possibility of being reborn a dog tomorrow, in the household of even an enemy. So intricate is the working of **Kamma**. All I seek is to present the available evidence, in as simple a manner as possible, having sifted and analysed what I have myself gathered from time to time in my own search for enlightenment. And, in doing this, when dealing with intricate scientific processes, language easily understood by the man-in-the-street has been used, to bring home to the average reader the great truths propounded by the

Supreme Buddha, and which now 'find confirmation in the laboratories and test-tubes of the West'. If, even a few adults, among religionists, are aroused by this little book to give more serious thought to the problem of Existence, my pains will be well repaid.

By my efforts to promote Right Knowledge and Right Understanding among people of goodwill in all climes and in all lands, it is my hope that I too would one day win the fruits of Liberation from the recurring cycles of birth and death through Full Enlightenment.

EGERTON C. BAPTIST.

159, Hill Street,
Dehiwela,
Ceylon.
13th July, 2499
1955.

CHAPTER I

The Theists and Science

God

There arises from time to time the question of God, His existence, or non-existence. People ask what is the ultimate origin of life?

‘Hinduism, in endeavouring to solve the problem, traces the origin of life to a mystical **Paramatma** from which emanate all atmas or souls that transmigrate from existence to existence, until they are finally reabsorbed in **Paramatma**’.

Theistic creeds, like Christianity for example, in attempting to give an explanation attributes everything to the fiat of an Almighty God. But before we direct our energies to the solving of the riddle of the universe, it is as well that we begin by asking what is implied by God, as theists are themselves confused in their minds on this question. Is God, for instance, a personal God as depicted in the guise of an old man with long white hair and beard and flowing robes pictured in the paintings of Michaelangelo in the Sistine Chapel in Rome and the Cathedral of Chalons or as depicted in ecclesiastical dress with a bishop’s mitre in the Church La Chapellsur-Crecy, or is God a Supernatural Force? Either way the difficulties are great and innumerable for one to surmount.

Science

Notwithstanding their theories theists also assert that eminent scientists testify to the presence or existence of God. However eminent, sincere and unprejudiced such scientists may be, such testifications are not a scientific method of approach to the question whether ‘God’ exists.

Scientific thinking is a process which proceeds from the basis of known facts, and if unknown assumptions are brought in, it is only till such time that they are either confirmed or rejected by experience. Hence, to rely on such 'testifications' of 'eminent scientists, sincere and unprejudiced', is not a scientific approach to the problem of God.

The medieval philosophers and their ancestors, Descartes, Berkeley, Leibniz, Spinoza, maintained, it is true, that the existence of God could be demonstrated by logical reasoning. But these so-called classical proofs of God's existence, including the much vaunted Metaphysical and Teleological Arguments of Theologian Aquinas receives such devastating treatment at the hands of Kant, that they need not be resurrected today.

Hermon Minkowski resorting to mathematics proved that if we accept the velocity of light as constant, then the measuring instruments must have undergone a change as a result of their motion. He showed that when the velocity of the observer is increased his distance begins to shorten and his time intervals begin to lengthen. So that when he attains the speed of light his distance will dwindle down to zero and his time-intervals will extend to eternity. This makes the existence of God a definite possibility, for God alone is represented as being eternally present everywhere at the same time.

Unfortunately, however, for the theist, Minkowski also proved mathematically that the velocity of light is a critical velocity which can never be attained by any physical force. Thus, Minkowski proved mathematically that, even as a force, God does not exist.

It may be mentioned here, however, that while the West always keeps thinking in terms of physical forces, and seems unable, as yet, to alter its materialistic theory, in the East, Buddhist psychology taught so long as 2,500 years ago, that *thought* has an infinite

velocity; that is to say, that it could transcend time and space, overcoming all barriers. It is faculty which, when developed, enables one to penetrate, for instance, into the most secret recesses of other peoples' hearts, see how people die and are re-born in other spheres of existence see distant objects (clairvoyance), hear distant sounds (clairaudience), go through physical barriers, walk on water, traverse through space, etc. (magical powers). In Buddhist parlance, these powers are known as the **Pañca-abhiññā** (i.e. the five supernormal powers).

Dr. J. B. Rhine, the U.S. scientist is now conducting certain experiments in *extra-sensory-perception*, in that branch of science known as Para-psychology, seeking to explain telepathy, precognition, etc., and it may perhaps be only a matter of time before the West too proves conclusively what the East has all the time known, namely, that *Mind* is Supreme in all human activity:

Manōpubbhagamā dhammā manōsetthā manōmayā
said the Buddha; meaning thereby, that:

All states arising have Mind for their cause, Of Mind are the offspring.

Let us digress for a while to clarify this statement. Mind is certainly, as the Buddha taught, supreme in all human activity. And, the primary aim of mental exercise is to bring the Mind to a state of one-pointedness. Thereafter, transcending in four stages the space-time continuum of phenomenal perception, one reaches to the timeless and unconditioned state, known to Buddhists, as **Nibbāna**. If we are to view phenomena objectively, then, our Minds must be unconditioned, and outside the causal process. And, that is the aim of every Buddhist. For, the Mind that is circumscribed by ideas imposed 'limits', as it were, on phenomena, or, 'events' in the continuum of space and time. And, we, therefore, use such conventional modes of expression as 'past', 'present', and 'future',

because our Minds are still circumscribed by concepts. We are still *within* the subject-object relationship.

When a *yogi*, for instance, through mental exercise attains one-pointedness (**Samādhi**) in fourth **jhāna**, he begins to transcend the 'limits' of time and space imposed by our conceptual thinking. And, develops the faculty referred to earlier as the **Panca-abhiññā**, which enables him to 'see' and to 'hear' what we do not. This faculty is the natural outcome of one's ability to concentrate on one point to the exclusion of all distracting sensations that normally arise in ordinary thinking. Hence, such a person's insight is beyond the capacity of ordinary mortals, though, of course, he too, still remains within the subject-object relationship.

There are sects in every country who try to gain control of the vital forces in nature, whether among the Jains, the Hindus, the early Christians in the Hermetic Lodges of Egypt where Christianity first took root, or among the early Buddhists and Brahmans inhabiting the eastern valley of the Ganges in time of the Buddha. In Egypt people were trained in the temple of Ma-at to develop the psychic eye, and when they responded to the training, were called 'Seers', because they were able to look into the past and foretell the future. This psychic faculty was called the 'Third Eye', and corresponds to one of the five Supernormal Powers or **Pañca-abhiññā** of Buddhists, with but one fundamental exception. Ancient Egyptians and other 'Seers' had a limited vision, extending to a maximum range of forty **kalpas** (world-cycles of time) into the past and forty **kalpas** into the future. The limited vision was because they had still to destroy what are known to Buddhists as the **Asavas** (Defilements) i.e. **Kāma-tanhā** (Sense-desires), **Bhava-tanhā** (desire for Eternalism), **Diṭṭhi** (False Views), and **Avijjā** (Ignorance), which bind beings, however exalted they might be, to the recurring cycles of birth and death.

The Buddhist Arahāt's capacity to 'see' into the continuum of space and time, on the other hand, is not restricted, but dependent on his attainments, he could see far into space and time. A **Pacceka-Buddha**'s vision is even greater than that of an Arahāt, but a Supreme Buddha's vision surpasses them all, and He alone possesses an added faculty, namely, the ability to see at a glance what previous good or evil acts (**Kamma**) conditioned a being's present existence and would condition his future existence. He alone knew when the moment of fruition, the ripening of Wisdom can come. This faculty is peculiar to a Supreme Buddha because He has practised the ten Perfections (**Pāramis**) to saturation-point over a longer period of time than an Arahāt, or even a **Pacceka-Buddha**, and has gained excellence in every department of knowledge, mundane and supramundane. Hence, His vision is unsurpassed, both in the realms of gods, and among men. They may be likened to three types of beings who 'see' with the aid of Starlight, Moonlight and Sunlight, respectively.

Now, in keeping with each individual person's development, there are some among us, who we say are psychic. Indeed, to a greater or lesser degree, we are all *psychic*, but most of us, only to an infinitesimal degree. A few there are, however, to a marked degree. The latter have practised, to a greater or lesser degree in previous incarnations, the mental exercises leading to one-pointedness, though they do not apparently know it now. Equipped thus with a more sensitive mental apparatus than most beings, they are now possessed with an uncanny deeper insight into events in the continuum of space and time.

Accordingly, some are able to predict events by merely 'reading' cards or holding an article to their foreheads against the awakened or dormant 'Third Eye', which tunes in to (consciously or unconsciously), and commingles with the vibrations emanating from

the article. And, as these vibrations represent a certain picture or 'event', just as do our thoughts, such folk are able to describe the associations attached to it. The emanations are often so fine and numerous that they continue to be given off for thousands of years, just as with radium. That this is so is evidenced by an episode narrated in the Buddhist Scriptures.

There was once, we are told, a man, a great yogi, called **Vaṅghīsa**. He was able to tell by merely tapping on a skull, where a particular person had been re-born. He was an adept in the science of Sound. Many people flocked to him with the skulls of their dead, if only they might hear a word of hope, - a word of good cheer! The Buddha, in His compassion, always seeking to lead men on to the Path that brings peace through **Nibbāna**, reasoned, that so clever a man was likely to grasp His teaching easily. Accordingly, having arranged to produce three skulls before **Vaṅghīsa**, He went to see him. **Vaṅghīsa** was naturally flattered, and not a little amused, and so was the populace. For, here was the Supreme Buddha Himself visiting the *yogi*, **Vaṅghīsa**, with skulls. The customary greetings were exchanged, and the skulls produced. **Vaṅghīsa** (so the story goes) examined the skulls and pronounced that the first skull showed rebirth in the **Peta** world (i.e. one of the lower ghost purgatorial states). 'Very well', the Buddha said, 'you are right'. The second skull, **Vaṅghīsa** said, showed rebirth in the Deva world (i.e. a celestial realm). 'Quite right', agreed the Buddha. But, tap as he may the third skull, **Vaṅghīsa** was literally 'stumped'. He tried and tried, but could not tell. Thereupon, he enquired of the Buddha, if He knew. And, the Buddha smilingly replied, 'Yes, I do know, but I will explain only if you will visit me sometime'. **Vaṅghīsa** was an honest man, and decided to visit the Buddha. And while expounding the sublime Dhamma the Buddha explained why the third skull had baffled him. That being, indeed, had actually not been re-born in any one of the thirty-one states of sentient existence. His **Kamma** had been brought to a state of Perfect

Balance, and there was no 'attraction or repulsion' - it was the skull of an Arahāt. Hence, **Vaṅghīsa** had failed to locate a 'place' of rebirth. For, Arahats are reborn no more in the worlds of sentient existence. Since there is no rebirth for an Arahāt, there were no vibrations linking this skull with a new abode. There being no vibrations, there was no 'wave-length' established too. That is why **Vaṅghīsa** had failed.

And, just as a clean cloth from which all stain has been washed away will readily take in the dye, so did **Vaṅghīsa** obtain, in no long time, the pure and spotless Eye for the Truth, and he knew: 'Whatsoever has a beginning in that is inherent also the necessity of dissolution'. In other words, **Vaṅghīsa** too attained to the unconditioned – he became another Arahāt.

This briefly explains certain aspects of extra-sensory-perception like card-reading, etc. which work, more or less, on the same principles of modern Radar and were known to Buddhists from ancient times. But in certain instances of pre-cognition, where no object that gives off vibrations is made use of, and an event is seen before it actually 'occurs', what really happens is that the person touches momentarily the 'summits' of his former achievements, which through mental exercise, had bordered on the unconditioned and timeless. The latter have, indeed, confounded some of the greatest thinkers of our time.

Dr. Rhine's researches, therefore, into the realms of pre-cognition, when concluded, should be not only interesting, but even revealing to many, who now, through fear and superstition, believe in Divine-inspiration.

Theists have also tried to lean on the Second Law of Thermo-Dynamics in their efforts to maintain the existence of God. Now, what is the Second Law of Thermo-Dynamics? Briefly, this law

says that natural processes cannot be reversed. In other words, it means that the universe has been expanding, or going 'forward', and does not, and cannot go 'backwards'. The layman or non-scientific mind can grasp the underlying principle of this Law by considering a few simple examples : Say, for instance, a child is born of a woman's womb. Now, according to the Law of Thermo-Dynamics, this child must develop in a 'forward' direction: that is to say, it cannot 'go back into the same womb', as it were; no, not at any rate, in that incarnation! Take another simple example: say, a seed is planted and a tree results. Now, the tree that sprouts forth from the seed cannot get back into that seed again. The process is one of going 'forward'. all the time. From this, theists try to argue that as natural processes cannot be reversed, the universe has had a beginning in time, implying 'Creation'. In fact, some scientists in hazarding a guess, have actually calculated the beginning to have occurred about two billion years ago.

The Second Law of Thermo-Dynamics cannot be challenged. But there is one important weak link in the chain of argument which appears to have been safely ignored by theists and such scientists in their calculations.

For, while it is true that scientists have proved that natural processes cannot be reversed, it is also equally scientifically true that the universe has been, both expanding and contracting. And, this process has been going on through eternity. Where then is the beginning of time that is said to have occurred two billion years ago?

Thus, if the underlying principle of the Second Law of Thermo-Dynamics is understood, it could be of no practical value or assistance to theists who vainly endeavour to find a beginning in time that might imply Creation.

Now, let us examine the theistic view - a little further. Theists say that God created the earth (matter) first, and then man (mind). But, we know that man is to this world what mind is to matter. This is to say, Man and his external world is a relationship, for if there is no man, there would be no world as far as 'he' is concerned; and, if there is no mind, there would be no world as far as 'he' is concerned; and, if there is no mind, there would be no matter to be observed. This is confirmed by Einstein who says that mind and matter must arise together or not at all. Hence, all philosophical views which look upon mind as evolved from matter are clearly wrong. For, the Theory of Relativity proves the simultaneous genesis of mind and matter quite conclusively.

This confutes the Biblical story of special creation, quite apart from the fact that it looks somewhat superfluous to call in an Almighty God to create two illusions. For, is not the material world, including mind and matter, an illusion, dependent on the arising of causes?

And now, finally we come to an argument that is a favourite among theists. In Ceylon, it is known as the 'Watchmaker' argument. Here, we are told, that even so small and relatively simple a piece of machinery as a watch must have a maker. It cannot come into existence automatically. And so it follows, say the protagonists of theory of God, that the Universe with all its complex balance of forces, all its wonders, all its stars and planets and other celestial bodies working in perfect co-ordination, must have had a Creator.

But there are many objections to this argument, a few of which we shall consider here. For instance, who ever heard of any watchmaker coming into existence automatically. If we are therefore to be logical, this should apply equally to the Universe-maker as well. He too must have had a maker, who in his turn must have had a maker, and so on. The argument ends in futility, for where is one to stop?

Now can we ever find a watchmaker who made a watch out of absolutely nothing? How, then can we think of an Universe-maker who achieved this impossible feat? On the assumption, however, that he too, like our watchmaker, had materials, from where did he obtain his materials? Had these materials any prior existence?

On the watchmaker theory, if we are to regard this as an argument at all, we are led inevitably to the conclusion that the universe was built not by one Universe-Maker, but by several of them. For, we find that even so simple a mechanism as a watch is the work or creation of several people, each one specialist in his own branch of activity. On this analogy, the Universe, if ever it was created by a conscious and intelligent agency, would have had a large body of people working for that Agency. There would have then been a team of makers, rather than one sole maker; a Syndicate in fact.

The purpose of mentioning this point of view is not as an argument in support of a Syndicate or Agency as the Creating Force of the universe, but merely to point out that it is a logical conclusion, perfectly consistent with the data provided, and the reasoning sought to be applied thereto by reference to the 'Watchmaker' theory.

The Buddha has however spoken of gods. For, in Buddhist cosmology there are many gods. They are called **Devas**. He taught the hard truth that these gods, too, like us human beings, are subject to decay and death, as the inexorable law of change applies to gods, in as much as it does to men. The gods live long, much longer than humans, because of their own good **kamma**. Some of these gods are very powerful, again this is a result of their own good **kamma**, and this fact should not surprise any one and create the impression of omnipotency. For, do we not find even among us humans, some who are endowed with much power, some with much wisdom, and so forth. Unfortunately, as with most humans, gods too sometimes imagine that since they live long and are very

powerful, they would continue as they are through eternity. And, when the hard day comes of separation from their lofty pedestals, with the exhaustion of the **Kamma**-force that propelled them into such positions, once again there is grief, pain, lamentation, suffering, and misery, at the prospect of having to give up what they prized so much and held before. The greatest fallacy from which the gods themselves suffer is this erroneous belief that they will live forever. They do not realize that their glory will not last for ever, and will cease with the expending of their **Kamma** or Merit. They are lulled into a sense of false security and complacency owing to their longevity and power. But, in time, the gods too must die, and are once again reborn into some other phenomenal state, in keeping with the law of **Kamma**. For, just as cattle die, so do men and flies; and gods, too, must one day die, because they also are conditioned beings, not as yet having attained the supreme, unconditioned state of **Nibbāna**, which alone can provide immunity from the recurring cycles of birth and death.

The gods often suffer from self-complacency, and, in their ignorance, they appear, from time to time, among men and mislead them by urging them to endeavour to reach the god-states. It is a case of the blind leading the blind!

But it must be understood that the Buddha's denial of God is only in respect of a Supreme Being - as Creator, Vanquisher and Controller of the Universe! There is no such Deity, Omnipotent and Unchanging, even in **Nibbāna**, the highest Goal of Buddhism. For **Nibbāna** is 'soulless', or, without the substratum of self, - void of even a 'causeless cosmic power'. This is admirably brought out without ambiguity and doubt, by the use of the word *dhmma* in the third line of the Buddha's own words: **Sabbe sankhārā anicca** (all component things are transient), **Sabbe sankārā dukkha** (all component things are sorrowful), **Sabbe dhmmā anatta** (all mundane and supramundane "things" are soulless).

CHAPTER II

A Supreme Buddha Arises in the World

His Early Life

Now, unlike the theists who have played into the hands of the Communists and do not yet realize the damage they have done and are continuing to do even today to the Free World by persisting in their own pet theories, there arose in the eastern valley of Ganges, in India, 2,500 years ago, a great World Teacher - a Supreme Buddha - who satisfactorily solved the riddle of life.

The Communist point of view was not unknown to the Buddha. In fact, it was well known to the people of **Jambūdīpa** (India) ever so long as 2,500 years ago. In the **Brahma - Jāla Sutta** (or Supreme Net), the Buddha enumerates 62 False Theorisings (**Micchāditṭhi**) prevalent at the time, and, among these, is **Uccheda-Vāda**, which, in effect, is the Marxist view of today. That perhaps is why eastern people have refused to be scared by the Communist bogey, and are only concerned with restoring their ancient cultures and civilizations, and re-establishing those forms of government that were in existence prior to the invasions by western colonial rulers. For, inherent in such systems was a type of socialist Democracy built in best traditions of **Cakkravartī** kings.

Briefly, this is the history of the Supreme Buddha. He was born about 623 B.C. in the district of Nepal, an Indian **Sakyan** Prince, by name **Siddhatta Gotama**. At the age of sixteen he married his cousin, the beautiful Princess **Yasodharā**.

After his happy marriage he lived for nearly thirteen years in royal splendour and luxury, blissfully ignorant of the vicissitudes of life outside the palace gates.

As the years passed, truth gradually illumined him. In his twenty-ninth year, which marked the turning point of his career, his son **Rāhula** was born. Realizing that all living things are, without exception, subject to birth, decay, and death, and that all worldly pleasures are merely a prelude to suffering, he regarded even his own offspring as a bondage. Comprehending thus the universality of sorrow, he decided to discover a panacea for this universal malady of humanity.

Accordingly, he renounced his royal pleasures, donned the simple garb of an ascetic, and became a wandering Seeker of Truth. He approached many a distinguished teacher of his day, but none could solve him the riddle of existence. All the so-called philosophers were groping in the dark. As they were ignorant and themselves caught in the whirlpool of life and death, it was again, an instance of the blind leading the blind.

The Middle Path

Departing from his teachers, he decided to go forth on the Great Quest alone and independently. And, one morning, as he sat in solitude and profound meditation under the Bodhi Tree (or Tree of Enlightenment, as it afterwards came to be called) at **Budh-Gayā**, unaided and unguided by any Supernatural Agency, but relying solely on his own efforts and wisdom, he attained understanding of things as they really are and became the Fully Awakened One. He became a Supreme Buddha - a World Teacher - a Teacher of both Gods and Men.

His method of attainment, which avoided the two extremes of self-mortification and self-indulgence, came to be known as the Middle Path - **Majjhima Patipadā**.

Having attained Supreme Enlightenment, that is to say, the Perfection

of **Nibbāna**, He devoted the remainder of His life to the service of mankind, both by example and precept, dominated by no personal motive whatsoever; and, after a very successful ministry of forty-five years, passed away into **Pari-Nibbāna**.

This Extraordinary Man defeated God

The Buddha was not a God. He was born human and died a human, but He was an extraordinary man. He left no room for anyone to fall into the error of believing Him to be an immortal being, or a reincarnation of a saint or god. There is no deification of this great Teacher.

He exhorted His disciples to depend on themselves for their Salvation, for both defilement and purity depends on oneself.

‘You yourselves should make the exertion. The Tathagatas (another name applied to Buddhas) are only teachers’,

He used to say:

To depend on others for Salvation (or liberation from the recurring cycles of birth and death) is negative, but to depend on oneself is positive. Dependence on others means surrender of one’s efforts. Hence, the saying ‘the beginning of Wisdom is fear of the Lord’ has no meaning to the Buddhist. For, says the Buddha, ‘Wheresoever fear arises it ariseth in the fool, not in the wise man’ (*Maj. Nik. 115*). Buddhist Saints - Arahats - do not weep. People weep because they are ignorant, emotional, unbalance - worldlings yet! The foolish weep: the Wise do not weep!

The Buddha’s last Message to His disciples, when He lay dying was:-

‘Be ye islands unto yourselves be ye a refuge unto yourself;
seek for no refuge in others.

Subject to decay are all component things;

With diligence work out your own Salvation’.

In effect, His teachings seemed to say: ‘What I have achieved,
you, too, can accomplish. For, what Man has done, Man can Do!

CHAPTER III

The Buddha's Main Teaching

Transiency, Sorrow and Substancelessness

The Buddha's main teachings concerned the transiency of all component things - phenomena, the non-existence of a 'soul' or '**ātma**' or the substancelessness of mundane and supramundane things, and the impossibility of finding an eternal heaven in a process of continual change. He also taught that we ourselves are responsible for the conditions or situations we find ourselves in today and at any time. His teaching is tersely summed up in the **Anguttara Nikāya** - pt. 1, p. 286, which reads:-

'Whether the **Tathāgatas** appear or not, O Bhikkhus (i.e. Monks) it remains a fact, an established principle, a natural law that all conditioned things are transient (**Anicca**), sorrowful (**Dukkha**), and everything (including even supramundane things) is soul-less (**Anatta**). This fact the **Tathāgata** realizes, understands, and when He has realized and understood it, He announces, teaches, proclaims, establishes, discloses, analyses, and makes it clear, that all conditioned things are transient, sorrowful, and everything (including even supramundane things) is soul-less'. *1

Soul

Denying the existence of an unchanging 'Soul' or 'atma', the Buddha said:-

'The body (**Rūpa**), O Bhikkhus, is soul-less (**Anatta**). If O Bhikkhus, there were in this a soul (i.e. a permanent unchanging "entity" or "ego" created by a God, or emanating from a **Paramatma**), then this body would not be subject

to ill. "Let this body be thus, let this body be not thus" - such possibilities would also exist. But, O Bhikkhus, in as much as this body is soul-less, it is subject to ill, and no possibility exists for (commanding the body from within) saying : "Let this be so, let this not be so".'

'In the same manner sensations (**vedanā**), perceptions (**saññā**), volitional activities (**saṅkhāra**) and consciousness (**viññāṇa**) are soul-less' (**Anattalakkhana Sutta**).'*1

The so-called being is composed of five Groups. Outside them there is no being. If one removed the Groups, nothing remains. A Soul abides neither in any one Group nor in all of them nor outside them.

And just as when the parts are rightly set,
The word "chariot" ariseth (in our minds);
So doth our usage covenant to say,
A being" when the aggregates are there*1

No doer is there who does the deed,
Nor is there one who feels the fruit
Constituent parts alone roll on *1

Anattā or 'No-Soul' is the central pivot on which the whole of the Buddha's philosophy turn. Even as all sea-water has the same taste of salt, so if we take any part of the Dhamma, or for the matter of that, any phase of life in a Buddhist country, we shall find it saturated with the blessedness of its saving grace.

The belief in a permanent 'Soul' or '**Ātma**' is due to the deceptive data provided by the five senses. This belief is the chief impediment to the attainment of complete freedom from sorrow.

*1 Ven. Narada, The Buddha Dhamma

The teaching of 'No-Soul' has a profound ethical value. So long as man believes in a soul-entity it is impossible for him to get rid of selfishness. Hence, the Buddha says, 'Wheresoever self is, virtue cannot exist'. Banish the self-idea and altruism is replaced on its proper ethical basis. Even as in the domain of Astronomy the heliocentric system has supplanted the now exploded geocentric theory, the teaching of 'No-Soul', or the new psychology, has overthrown the ego-centric system of the attavadi.

The **anattavādi** alone can thus realise the full significance of all life. Once this sublime idea is grasped, it would be folly to steal one's neighbour's purse or to kill one's brother man, for these offences would be committed against one's self.

Heavens

The Buddha taught that heavenly conditions and states are attainable, but that they are fleeting and impermanent, being characterised by transiency (**Anicca**) and substancelessness (**Anattā**), which are inherent features of all phenomena. For, when the energy that gave birth to a being in a celestial realm is exhausted, that being of necessity, dies to that states and re-manifests on some other appropriate plane of consciousness.

Heavenly states endure for a long period, thousands of years, and aeons of time, which, when compared with 60, 70, or a 100 years of human life seem to be almost eternal. But this is only a Delusion (**Moha**), and is based on deceptive data provided by senses, says the Buddha. Delusion springs from Ignorance (**Avijjā**); and beings crave for happiness, now here and now there, not realizing the real nature of the cosmos. Ignorance (**Avijjā**) is, therefore, according to the Buddha's Message to suffering humanity, the source of all Sorrow.

Being of impermanency, hells, too, are not eternal; and gods also must eventually die.

Transient, alas! are all component things,
Subject are they to birth, - and then decay;
Having gained birth to death the life-flux swings:
Bliss truly dawns when unrest dies away.

Creator

The Buddha refuted the theory that everything is the creation of a Supreme Being, a God, or Creator. On one occasion, He said (**Jātaka 528 - Mahābodhi**):-

‘If there exists some Lord all powerful to fulfil,
In every creature bliss or woe, and action good or ill,
That Lord is stained with Sin. Man does but work his will’*1

On another occasion (**Jātaka 543**) - **Bhūridatta**, the Buddha said:-

‘He who has eyes can see the sickening sight;
Why does not Brahma (i.e. God) set his creatures right?
If his wide power no limits can restrain,
Why is his hand so rarely spread to bless?
Why are his creatures all condemned to pain?
Why does he not to all give happiness?
Why do fraud, lies and ignorance prevail?
Why triumphs falsehood - truth and justice fail?
I count your Brahma (i.e. God) one th’ unjust among
(like other unjust beings Buddha regards God
also as another unjust being),
Who made a world in which to shelter wrong’ (as
He had made a world to shelter wrong). *1

*1 Ven. Nārada, The Buddha Dhamma

Origin of the World

But, could there have been a beginning in time? If Einstein's Theory of Relativity is accepted, Space and Time are merely ideas giving us one concept in mathematics, and there could never have been a beginning in time, as the concept of time itself depends on the movement of objects occupying physical space. For, without material bodies and the physical space they occupy, there could come into existence, and without the existence of phenomena there could be no time. It is therefore meaningless to talk of the beginning of 'Creation', or a First Cause. Because Creation of something out of nothing can only mean the creation of 'time', and to create 'time', there must be phenomena, which again means the prior existence of 'time', or a time when the phenomenon was not there, as there can be no time without phenomena. Hence, as the Buddha insists. There could never have been a time when **Samsāra** (i.e. phenomenal existence) and a physical universe in some form or another did not exist. *¹

With scientific exactness, therefore, the Buddha's own view on the matter is recorded thus:-

'Without cognisable end is this **Samsāra** (cycles of birth and death - phenomenal existence). A first beginning of beings, who, obstructed by ignorance and fettered by craving, wander and fare on, is not to be perceived. Incalculable is the beginning, brethren, of this faring on. The earliest point is not revealed of running on, the faring on, of beings cloaked in ignorance, tied to craving'.

How Belief in a Creator Originated

Explaining the origin of the belief in an Almighty God as represented

*1. Condensed from Buddhism Answer the Marxist Challenge, by Francis Story.

by **Mahā Brahmā**, the so called Creator, and how certain supposedly-inspired teachers of humanity from time to time come to believe in such an illusory creature, the Buddha said:-

‘There comes a time, friends, when, sooner or later, after the lapse of a long epoch, the world is dissolved and evolved. When this takes place, beings have mostly been reborn in the World of Radiance. There they dwell, made of mind, feeding on rapture, radiating light from themselves, traversing space, continuing in beauty, and thus they remain - for a long, long period of time.

‘Now there comes also a time, friends, when sooner or later this world-system begins to re-evolve. When this happens, the abode of the Brahmas appears, but it is empty. And some beings or others, either because his span of years has passed, or because his merit is exhausted, deceases from the world of *Radiance*, and comes to life in the abode of the Brahmas. And there also he lives, made of mind, feeding on rapture, radiating light from himself, traversing space, continuing beauty; and thus does he remain for a long, long period of time. Now there arises in him, from his dwelling there so long alone, a dissatisfaction and a longing: Oh, would that other beings too might come to join me in this place! And just then, either because their span of years had passed, or because their merit was exhausted, other beings fall from the world of Radiance and appear in the abode of the Brahmas as companions to him; and in all respects they lead a life like his (They are One with the Father, as it were!)

‘On this, friends, that being who was first reborn thinks thus: I am Brahma, the Great Brahma, the Vanquisher, the Unvanquished, the All-seeing, the Disposer, the Lord, the

Maker, the Creator, the Chief, the Assigner, the Master of Myself, the Father of all that are and are to be. By me are these beings created. And why is that so? A while ago I thought: Would that other beings too might come to this state of being! Such was the aspiration of my mind, and lo! These beings did come.

‘And those beings themselves who arose after him, they too think thus: This worthy must be **Brahma** (i.e. God), the Great Brahma, the Vanquisher, the Unvanquished, the All-seeing, the Disposer, the Lord, the Maker, the Creator, the Chief, the Assigner, the Master of Himself, the Father of all that are and are to be. By this **Brahma** (i.e. God) have we, good sirs, been created. And why is that so? Because he, as we see, arose here *first*, but we arose *after* him.

‘On this, friends, that being who first arose becomes longer lived, handsome, and more powerful, but those who appeared after him become shorter lived, less comely, less powerful. And it might well be, friends, that some other being, on deceasing from that state, should come to this state (on Earth). So come, he might go forth from the household life unto the homeless state (i.e. become a homeless Wanderer or Ascetic). And having thus gone forth by reason of ardour, effort, devotion, earnestness, perfect intellection, he reaches up to such rapt concentration (through Meditation) that with rapt mind he calls to mind his former dwelling place (with Brahma), but remembers not what went before. He says thus: ‘That Worshipful **Brahmā** (i.e. God), the Vanquisher, the Unvanquished . . . Father of all that are and are to be, he by whom we were created, he is permanent, constant, eternal, unchanging, and he will remain so for ever and ever. But we who were created by that Brahma (i.e. God), we

have come hither all impermanent, transient, unstable, short-lived, destined to pass away.

‘Thus was appointed the beginning of things which ye, sirs, declare as your traditional doctrine, to wit, that it has been wrought by an overlord, by **Brahmā** (i.e. God)’.*1

A New Heaven and a New Earth

In the **Aggañña Sutta** the Buddha explains that at the stage when the world re-evolves, the Earth is dark and covered with water. This, it will be noted, is an extract description of the early phases of the Earth before the Sun dissipated the steam that filled the atmosphere. Beings existing then were un-differentiated as to sex. Ages having passed, the moisture gradually cleared and the Earth begins to appear. ‘Earth with its savour was spread out in the waters. Even as a scum forms on the surface of boiled milky rice that is cooling so did the dry land appear. The description is one of scientific exactness.

The radiant, mind-formed beings then begin to feed on the scum of the waters: the taste is pleasing and craving enters into them. As they feed, bodies become grosser: ‘And in measure as they thus fed, did their bodies become solid, and did variety in their form and comeliness become manifest’. This process continues for ages, and meanwhile the land and waters separate and the mist clears, allowing Sun and Moon to become visible. As beings develop, discrimination appears between them, and they become conscious of differences. Various species begin to differentiate. Gradually the pleasing savour of the earth on which they nourished themselves disappears. Craving for different nourishment arises: ‘Then, Vasettha, when the savoury earth had vanished for these beings outgrowths

*1 Patika Sutta, Dig. Nik. By Rhys Davids.

appeared in the soil. The manner of the rising up thereof was as the springing up of a mushroom, it had colour, odour and taste... Then those beings began to feast on these outgrowths of the soil, and thus continued for a long time'. This is a description of the first fungoid vegetation. 'And so did their bodies grow ever more solid, and the differences in their comeliness more manifest'.

Thereafter, creeping plants appear and beings take to eating these; after lapse of ages rice begins to grow. Beings then feed on rice: 'And in measure as they, thus feeding went on existing, so did the bodies of those beings become even more solid and more differentiated... In the female appeared the distinctive features of the female, and in the male those of the male. Then truly did the female contemplate the male too closely, and the male the female. In them contemplating over much the one the other, passion arose and burning entered the body. They in consequence thereof followed their lusts'. From this began hatreds and enmities. Here again the description of how begins from being sexually undifferentiated, become bi-sexual, is biologically exact. At this point the origin of sexual morality is described, followed by details of the social structure and property system: 'And so... they stored up rice enough for four, then eight days. Now from that time, **Vasettha**, the rice began to degenerate... the reaped or cut stems (which grew again before the hoarding for four and eight days began) did not grow again; a break became manifest where the rice had been cut and the rice-stubble stood in clumps'. Theft then begins together with laws against theft and ultimately the strongest and handsomest of the community is chosen as Chief or Lawgiver. 'Chosen by the people, **Vasettha**, is what is meant by **Mahā Sammata**, the Great Elect. (**Mahā Sammata**, traditionally, was the first great king of Solar Dynasty, from which the **Sākya** clan, to which the Buddha belonged, was descended. Perhaps the germ for our belief in a "Divine Right of Kings" is to be found here). Lords of the fields is what is meant by **Khattiya**; so **Khattiya** (Noble) was the next

expression to arise. **Rajā** was the third standing phrase to arise. . . Their origin was from among those very begins, and no others'. After this rose the priest class of Brahmins, whose duty was to instruct the laity in moral principles and themselves live austere lives, practising meditation in forest retreats. Some, who found this life too arduous, returned to the villages and became known as **Ajjhāyaka**, repeaters of the **Vedas**: 'Thus the third phrase for such people came into use. At that time they were looked upon as the lowest ; now they are thought the best'.

Then follows a description of how certain men became merchants (**Vessas**) while others became hunters and followed other degrading pursuits thus becoming the **Suddas (Sūdras)**, the lowest caste. From each of the four castes individuals would from time to time forsake the world to become religious recluses, when all caste distinctions ceased to exist for them. 'And it took place according to a norm (a fitness, justly)'. Any one of the four castes who has led a bad life in deed, word and thought, whose views of life are wrong, will, in consequence of his views and deeds be reborn after death in one of the realms of misery, but one who, no matter what his caste, is self restrained in deed, thought and word and has fulfilled the seven Principles of Enlightenment, will attain to complete liberation in this very life.

It can truly be said that no parallel, or anything remotely approaching this accurate description of the genesis and biological development of life on the earth is to be found in the original teachings of any other religion. In its uniqueness it establishes beyond question the supramundane insight and omniscience of the Buddha. *¹

Now, such periods of dissolutions and re-evolutions of the world have been going on through eternity, and is well known to Buddhist

* 1. Condensed from Dig. Nik. By Rhys Davids and Sangiti by Francis Story

throughout eternity, and is well known to Buddhists throughout the world. It is no mere theory to those living in the Orient.

Perhaps it is this early phase of life on the earth at a time when the world re-evolves that is looked forward to by certain Christian sects who speak of a 'New Heaven and a New Earth', though perhaps they do not realize it themselves.

Buddhists admit all this, but maintain that in as much as sentient existence continues through each new world cycle, there is no cessation of Suffering, even if we are to be the first to enjoy such happy conditions on a new and savoury Earth when the world begins to re-evolve. In fact, the Buddha explained that in three ways the world is destroyed (or dissolved), - by fire, water and wind. In whichever manner the world is dissolved, when the Earth re-evolves, conditions are described herein.

The Buddha had Himself been through many such dissolutions of the world and re-evolutions, and had enjoyed heavenly conditions from time to time. Thus, through His own experiences He tells us rather than continue through such cycles in circles, birth itself must be stopped. For, birth itself is Suffering.

Incidentally, it may be noted here that the 'New Heaven and New Earth' re-evolve from the matter of another dissolved universe. Nothing is destroyed.

The Buddha's Silence

Many were the questions asked of the Buddha. But He did not answer every question put to Him by His followers. If questions were irrelevant and not conducive to deliverance from bondage, that is to say, the recurring cycles of birth and death, He observed Silence. For instance, there was once a young man named

Mālunkyaputta who had various speculations on whether the world was eternal or not eternal, whether the world was finite or infinite, and to this question, the Buddha made reply:-

‘If it be the belief, **Mālunkya**putta, that the world is eternal, will there be the observance of the Holy Life? In such a case - No. If it be the belief, **Mālunkya**putta, that the world (i.e. Sorrow) is not eternal, will there be the observance of the Holy Life? In that case also - No. But, **Mālunkya**putta, whether the belief be that the world is eternal or that it is not eternal, undoubtedly, there is birth, there is old age, there is death ... the extinction of which in this life itself I make known.

‘**Mālunkya**putta, I have not revealed whether the world is eternal or not eternal ; whether the world is finite or infinite. Why have I not revealed these? Because these are not profitable, do not concern the bases of holiness, are not conducive to aversion, to passionlessness, to cessation, to tranquillity, to intuitive wisdom, to enlightenment, or to **Nibbāna** (i.e. the Deathless state). Therefore I have not revealed these’.

*(Majjhima Nikāya - Cūla - Mālunkya*putta Sutta, No. 63)

Sometimes people made inquiry concerning the Deathless State of **Nibbāna**. Here, too, the Buddha observed Silence. For, **Nibbāna** is beyond imagination and description and the Buddha made no attempt to depict it, knowing that any such attempt could only present a false picture which would raise itself objectively - a deceptive goal - before the mind striving for liberation. The mind creates concepts and is shackled by them ; this part of the mental craving for ideas. Hence, **Nibbāna** cannot be described, though **Nibbāna** can be experienced here in this very life.

A beautiful and interesting fable related by the late **Silācāra** Thero brings this point out well.

‘Once upon a time there was a fish. And just because it was a fish, it had lived all its life in the water and knew nothing whatever about anything else but water. And one day as it swam about in the pond where all its days had been spent, it happened to meet a turtle of its acquaintance who had just come back from a little excursion on the land.

‘“Good day, Mr. Turtle!” said the fish: “I have not seen you for a long time. Where have you been?”

‘“O”, said the turtle, “I’ve just been for a trip on dry land”.

‘“On dry land!” exclaimed the fish: “What do you mean by ‘on dry land’? There is no dry land. I had never seen such a thing. Dry land is nothing”.

‘“Well”, said the turtle good-naturedly, “if you want to think so, of course you may; there’s no one who can hinder you. But that’s where I’ve been, all the same”.

‘“O come”, said the fish, “try to talk sense. Just tell me now what is this land of yours like? Is it all wet?”

‘“No, it is not wet”, said the turtle.

‘“Is it nice and fresh and cool?” asked the fish.

‘“No, it is not nice and fresh and cool”, the turtle replied.

‘“Is it clear, so that light can come through it?”, said the fish curiously.

‘“No, it is not clear; light cannot come through it”, the turtle replied.

‘“Is it soft and yielding; so that I could move my fins about in it and push my nose through it?”

‘“No, it is not soft and yielding; you could not swim in it”.

‘“Does it move or flow in streams?”

‘“No, it neither moves nor flows in streams”.

‘“Does it ever rise up into waves, then, with white foam in them?” asked the fish, becoming just a little impatient at this string of *Noes*.

‘“No”, replied the turtle truthfully: “it never rises up into waves that I have seen”.

‘“There now!” exclaimed the fish triumphantly. “Didn’t I tell that this land of yours was just nothing? I have just asked, and you have answered me that it is neither wet nor cool, not clear nor soft and that it does not flow in streams nor rise up into waves. And if it isn’t a single one of these things, what else is it, but nothing? Don’t tell me!”

‘“Well, well”, said the turtle, “if you are determined to think that dry land is nothing, I suppose you must just go on thinking so. But any one who knows what is water and what is land would say you were just a very silly fish, for you think that anything you have never known is nothing just because you have never known it”.

‘And with that the turtle turned away and, leaving the fish

behind in its little pond of water, set out on another excursion over the land that was nothing'. *1

It is evident from this fable that neither the turtle, which is acquainted with both land and sea, could explain to the fish the real nature of the land, nor could the fish understand what land is as it is acquainted only with the sea. In the same way the Arahats who are acquainted with both the mundane and the supramundane cannot explain to a worldling what the supramundane exactly is by mundane terms, nor can a worldling understand the supramundane merely by mundane knowledge.

Thus, rather than give his hearers a wrong impression, in His Wisdom, the Buddha observed Silence on such metaphysical questions, as they did not concern the main issue. This Silence has unfortunately been misinterpreted sometimes by biased writers; sometimes by uninformed writers, thereby conveying a false impression of the Buddha's teachings to those who might otherwise profit by His Message.

It might be added that the Buddha did not teach all that He knew. For, on one occasion whilst passing through a forest, He took a handful of leaves and said :

'O Bhikkhus, are there more leaves in my hand or more leaves in the forest yonder?' and they replied, 'There are more leaves in the forest, Lord'. 'Yea, what I have taught you is like the leaves in my hand, but what I know is like the leaves in the forest', He then said.

The Buddha taught mankind only what was absolutely essential for emancipation. Even so, He has forestalled many a scientist and philosopher of today.

*1. Ven. Narada, The Buddha Dhamma

CHAPTER IV

Kamma and the Life-flux - Santati

Thus, in brief, we have seen that the Buddha does not attempt to explain the Origin of life to mere worldlings who are more concerned with First Causes than with the leading of spiritual lives.

At the same time there is the assurance that if a worldling bides his time, living well the holy life, he can realize for himself, when he too reaches the goal, the intricate workings of the cosmos and find the answers to those questions that once baffled him so much. 'For', says the Buddha, 'Moral and virtuous Wanderers (Ascetics) and Brahmans (i.e. priests) do not force maturity on that which is unripe; they, being wise, wait for that maturity'.

It is wrong, therefore, to assert that the Buddha was 'Agnostic' on certain issues as is sometimes sought to be made out by some uninformed writers. The Buddha is known as the Fully Enlightened One. And, He always knew. He observed Silence only when it was to the spiritual advantage of his questioner, and not because He seemed to say within Himself - Agnosco - 'I do not know!'

He denied the postulated Supreme Godhead or Creator, the unchanging soul and eternal heaven of the theist. Brushing aside irrelevant questions, the Buddha takes for its starting point the 'being', as it is, here and now, and traces back the cause of its conditioned existence. And says that it is the experiences of the past that have produced the present being. These experiences constituted no more nor less than all the good and evil acts of the individual. This is called **Kamma**.

Life or existence, whether in celestial or in the lower forms of

consciousness, is conditioned by our **Kamma** which may be likened to a force like electricity. It is this force that finds manifestation in various states of consciousness, whether on a gross or subtle and refined level, on the principle, that *'wheresoever your treasure is there will your heart be also'*.

In other words, our forms, such as god, godling (**deva**), man, animal, ghost, and so on are merely the outward manifestations of this invisible Kammic force. This all pervading force carries with it all our innate characteristics, which usually lie latent, but may rise to the surface at unexpected moments, thus making it difficult for any one to judge another. From the Buddhist point of view therefore it is also meaningless to talk of 'hating the sin and loving the sinner'. For, apart from the act of sinning there is really no 'sinner'.

If this position is understood, one will be able to understand readily that the outward forms are merely the vessels which hold the Kammic energy. A man does not really become a dog in one birth nor does a dog, for instance, become a man in a subsequent birth. But the force which once manifested itself in the form of a man, can manifest its energies at other times as a god, godling (**deva**), animal, ghost, or man (again), etc.. in much the same way as electricity manifests its energy in bulbs of different colours and different voltages. In other words, the external phenomena, such as gods, godlings, (**devas**) beasts, ghosts, men, etc., are merely the receptacles which hold the Kammic energy of the individual life-flux.

Kamma

At this stage a brief explanation of **Kamma** would be useful. Leaving aside all its technical aspects, which must be gone into more thoroughly when one is sufficiently interested in the subject to break away the veil of Ignorance (**Āvijjā**) that enshrouds the

minds of many, **Kamma** may be described as the result of CRAVING in its diverse forms. This Craving it is that generates the driving force of **Kamma**.

For, the energy generated by the act of craving is directive, and tremendous in its effect. That is to say, whenever we crave, we crave for something, and the energy so generated will tend to bring that *something* about. This principle, by the way, is the one underlying New Thought, Christian Science, and similar movements. They all tell us that whatever we desire strongly enough and definitely enough we shall obtain, be it health, wealth, or power. Then there is also the natural law, namely, that whatever we acquire we must again lose as soon as the force behind the acquisition, the force of the original craving, has spent itself. It is then that we suffer doubly, for it is harder to miss what we have become accustomed to, than not to get what we do not expect.

Another important aspect in regard to **Kamma** requires a brief explanation here: that is this: the cravings of our previous existences also pre-dispose us to our present cravings. If they have been specific along certain lines - say the desire to become a builder of houses - the results will also be specific as far as the new circumstances will allow. In the next birth, then, we shall become builders of dwellings through an innate tendency that will drive us in that direction. In our childhood we shall show aptitude to building with nursery blocks; in youth we shall desire to erect tents and shelters, or study architecture; in manhood we shall become building contractors or architects. Since there is always an intermingling accumulation of energies from previous cravings, some stronger, some weaker, some more definite, some less so, they will, all of them, tend to come to the surface sooner or later, as opportunities present themselves and as they are evoked by circumstances. That is why human life is so varied and in many respects so contradictory.

Whatever energy has been generated, that must also be released. Craving generates energy; Action releases it. Hundreds of craving have given us an accumulation of energy: we are, therefore, capable of hundreds of different kinds of actions. But the most dominant cravings find vent in the most distinct activities. Thus there also arise child-prodigies, such as musicians, mathematicians, and so on, manifesting a particular dominant craving in keeping with opportunities afforded by environment.

From this we may readily gather that whatever happens to us, is coming to us, is deserved. Good, bad, or indifferent, it has been our own making, our own **Kamma**. No one else is to blame, no God and no Devil. We should accept, therefore, whatever comes of evil with resignation, and whatever of good, without elation.

This tendency to action, this generated and stored-up energy is what constitutes our self. We are nothing more nor less than tendency to action, resulting from craving. This is our self, our I, our individuality, our character. It is our capacity to respond. Even as a gong, when struck will respond with its own particular tone and volume, depending upon the kind of metal of which it is composed, the shape it holds, the way it is suspended, and the strength of blow; so, too, each of us, when being acted upon by our environment, will respond in a particular fashion. And the tendency to respond thus and not otherwise is our **Kamma**.

Kamma differentiates beings into low and high states

On one occasion a certain young man named **Subha** approached the Buddha, and questioned why and wherefore it was that among human beings there are low and high states, 'For', said he, 'we find amongst mankind the short-lived and the long-lived, the sickly and the healthy, the ill-looking and the good-looking, the uninfluential

and the influential, the poor and the rich, the low-born and the high-born, the ignorant and the intelligent’.

The Buddha briefly replied: ‘Every living being has **Kamma** as its own, its inheritance, its cause, its kinsman, its refuge. **Kamma** is that which differentiates all living beings into low and high states’.

He then enumerated the causes of such differences:

If, for instance, a person destroys life, is a hunter, besmears his hands with blood, is engaged in killing and wounding, and is not merciful towards living beings, he, as a result of his killing when born amongst mankind, will have a brief life.

If a person avoids killing, leaves aside cudgel and weapon, and is merciful and compassionate towards all living beings, he, as a result of his non-killing, when born amongst mankind, will enjoy long life.

If a person is in the habit of harming others with fist or clod, with cudgel or sword, he, as a result of his harmfulness, when born amongst mankind, will suffer from various diseases.

If a person is not in the habit of harming others, he, as a result of his harmlessness, when born amongst mankind, will enjoy good health.

If a person is wrathful and turbulent, is irritated by a trivial word, gives vent to anger, ill-will, and resentment, he, as a result of his irritability, when born amongst mankind, will be ill-looking.

If a person is not wrathful and turbulent, is not irritated even

by a torrent of abuse, does not give vent to anger, ill-will, and resentment, he as a result of his amiability, when born amongst mankind, will be good-looking.

If a person is jealous, envies the gains of others, marks of respect and honour shown to others, stores jealousy in his heart, he, as a result of his jealousy, when born amongst mankind, will be uninfluential.

If a person is not jealous, does not envy the gains of others, marks of respect and honour shown to others, stores not jealousy in his heart, he, as a result of his non-jealousy, when born amongst mankind, will be influential.

If a person is bent on charitable giving, he, as a result of his greediness, when born amongst mankind, will be poor.

If a person is bent on charitable giving, he, as a result of his generosity, when born amongst mankind, will be rich.

If a person is stubborn, haughty, honours not those who are worthy of honour, he, as a result of his arrogance and irreverence, when born amongst mankind, will have a birth in a low family.

If a person is not stubborn, not haughty, honours those who are worthy of honour, he, as a result of his humility and deference, when born amongst mankind, will have a birth in a high family.

If a person does not approach the learned and the virtuous and inquire what is good and what is evil, what is right and what is wrong, what should be practised and what should

not be practised, what should be done and what should not be done, what conduces to one's welfare and what to the reverse, he, as a result of his non-inquiring spirit, when born amongst mankind, will be ignorant.

If a person does approach the learned and the virtuous and make the above inquiries, he, as result of his inquiring spirit, when born amongst mankind, will be intelligent.

'Depending on this difference in **Kamma** appears the differences in the birth of beings, high and low, base and exalted, happy and miserable. Depending on the difference of **Kamma** appears the difference in the individual features of beings as beautiful and ugly, high-born or low-born, well-built or deformed. Depending on the difference of **Kamma** appears the difference in the worldly conditions of beings as gain and loss, fame and disgrace, blame and praise, happiness and misery.

Buddhism also teaches that there are three types of **Kamma**: **Kamma** that ripens in the same lifetime, **Kamma** that ripens in the next life and **Kamma** that ripens in successive births. Generally speaking, these three forms of **Kamma** are bound to produce results (**vipāka**), but to produce any effect, several auxiliary causes are required, and it sometimes happens that such auxiliary causes do not arise, and there are no effects. It may also come about that some weak **Kamma** is counteracted by stronger **Kamma** of an opposite type, and so does not produce vipaka or resultant. But, usually the results of good and bad **Kamma** may be seen manifesting side by side, as for instance, when a child is born into a rich and powerful family, but is physically weak; or, being born of poor parents may be healthy and highly intelligent. In fact, all possible combinations of fortune and misfortune are accountable to the mixture of past good and bad **Kamma**.

Briefly, the generating of these three types of Kamma depends on Causes that are to be found in the workings of our minds. For, man's mind may be likened to a piano keyboard playing tunes all the time. This keyboard has seventeen keys, or, thought-moments, and these comprise one whole thought-process. Of these are seven important keys which play a dominant role, and which determine all our moment-to-moment actions. In Buddhist Psychology they are referred to as the **Javana** process. And, in the manner one presses these seven keys, so to speak, provided the auxiliary causes also arise, the tunes will be played. Or, in the manner one re-acts to the impact of sensations that pour through the five sense-organs on to the Javana keys, one begins to create his future heavens and hells. For instance, if the re-action to the impact is on the first of these seven thought-moments, the resultant (**vipāka**), if any, will be in this life-time itself; if the re-action is on the seventh of the seven thought-moments, the resultant, if any, will be in the next or subsequent birth; and, if the re-action is on any of the intervening thought-moments - from second to sixth - the resultant, if any, depending on gravity, will be at some time, in this, the next, or any future birth, before **Nibbāna** is finally attained.

Now, this should not surprise us very much. For, do we not think before we act? And, in the process of thinking, do we not sometimes do a thing readily, spontaneously, or, again, with a degree of caution, - seeming to hesitate, as it were. Hence, even though we do not realize it, we are all doing a bit of gear-changing in our actions into three different streams of resultants - three types of **Kamma**. And, the situations confronting us at any time, have been projected, to a large extent, by the way our mental gears changed from time to time in response to sense-impressions.

Nature has thus ordered herself well, and the process of Becoming is kept going from moment to moment, and from birth to birth. As Shakespeare once so aptly said: 'All the world's a stage, and all

the men and women are merely players. They have exits and their entrances. And one man in his time plays many parts’.

If we remember these points we may understand why a powerful swindler, criminal or even murderer of today sometimes seems to get away with his crime, while the ‘god - fearing’ and pious folk of today appear to be dogged with misfortune with every stride they take! From the Buddhist point of view there is nothing to be alarmed at this. It may, in the case of the former (where a very strong past good **Kamma** is operating), be an instance, where folk are misusing what they had worked hard for themselves in an earlier time, while in the latter case, too, it may just be that though these people are now quiet and chastened, they had not always been like that in earlier incarnations, and are now, in a way, paying for what they too have had. Understanding this, the Buddhist naturally pities the wrong doer, while at the same time not envying his good fortune. Yes, pity him, because he is harming himself, like the man who foolishly withdraws all his money putting none back into the bank again. A day soon dawns when he is penniless. That, in effect, also explains why many a king of a former time is perhaps a beggar on the streets today.

The inequalities and seeming injustices of life thus become intelligible in the light of the law of cause and effect. And that is also how we can ‘get reason out of the mass of incongruity we call human life’.

Buddhists are patient by nature, and always merciful and long-suffering towards the wrong-doer. They are tolerant because they are convinced that they are not dealing with one life-time only; they are dealing with infinity. Old scores are settled automatically in due time. And nothing is final, until **Nibbāna** is attained.

Thus we see that our mental, intellectual, and moral differences are mainly due to our own actions and tendencies, which are the pre-

dispositions to our present conditions, while the manner in which we react to situations confronting us now from time to time also contribute to the situations in which we shall find ourselves in the future.

By **Kamma** one attains glory and praise,
By **Kamma** bondage, ruin, tyranny,
Knowing that **Kamma** bears fruit manifold,
Why say ye, "In the world no **Kamma** is?"

A note by Dr. George Grimm in *The Doctrine of the Buddha*, p. 246, would be of considerable interest to us in our attempts to understand the law of **Kamma**. For, says Dr. Grimm:

'It is not difficult in all these cases also to show the law of affinity as the regulator of the grasping of a new germ that occurs at death.

'Who is so devoid of compassion as to be able to kill men or even animals, carries deep within himself the inclination to shorten life. He finds satisfaction or even pleasure in the short-livedness of other creatures. Short-lived germs have therefore some affinity which makes itself known after his death in grasping of another germ which then takes place to his own detriment. Even so, germs bearing within themselves the power of developing into a deformed body, have an affinity for one who finds pleasure in ill-treating and disfiguring others.

'An angry person begets within himself an affinity for ugly bodies and their respective germs, since it is the characteristic mark of anger to disfigure the face.

'Whoever is jealous, niggardly, haughty, carries within himself the tendency to grudge everything to others and to despise them.

*1 Ven. Narada, *The Buddha Dhamma*

Accordingly germs that are destined to develop in poor, outward circumstances, possess affinity for him'.*1

It is, of course, only a consequence of above, that a change of sex may also ensue.

Thus it is related in the **Digha Nikāya** No. XXI that **Gopika**, a daughter of the **Sakya** house, was reborn after her death as **Gopaka Devaputta** (the son of a **Deva**), because the female mind had become repulsive to her, and she had formed a male mind within herself.

Whatever pain or happiness we experience is, therefore, an inevitable consequent of a past act. The Buddha Dhamma makes no provision for rewards and punishments. The followers of the Buddha speak in terms of cause and effect.

In the words of **Silācāra** Thero: 'If a person does something in his sleep, gets out of bed and walks over the edge of a verandah, he will fall into the road below and in all likelihood break an arm or leg or suffer something worse. But this will happen not at all as a punishment for his sleep-walking, but merely as its result. And the fact that he did not remember going out on the verandah would not make the slightest difference to the result of his fall from it, in the shape of broken bones. So the follower of the Buddha takes measures to see that he does not walk over verandahs or other dangerous places, asleep or awake, so as to avoid hurting himself or anybody who might be below and on whom he might fall'.

Though the Buddha attributes this variation in character and outward disposition in different beings to **Kamma**, yet He does not assert that everything is due to **Kamma**. There are five Orders or **Niyāmas** according to the Buddha. **Kamma** is only one of the five orders that prevail in the universe.

Santati, i.e. flux or continuity - but no 'Soul'

But **Kamma** or the 'force' of energy which is generated through our good and evil actions is not stored within the psyche (mind) or in a 'soul' of a theistic concept. The Buddha teaches that there is no such 'storehouse' in this everchanging complex machinery of man, for, man himself, is merely a group of five aggregates (**Pāñcakkhandha**). But the Buddha teaches that instead of such an unchanging 'soul' or permanent 'entity', there is a flux or **Santati** (continuity), which is the result of every experience the individual had passed through, every influence felt, every impression received, and dependent on this **Santati** (continuity), a group of appropriate aggregates (suitable to that individual flux or **Santati**) comes together, and a new being arises at the death of the old being. Apart from this group of aggregates and apart from this changing flux (or **Santati**) which itself is changing every moment, as 'it' takes in and lets out, so to speak, impressions from time to time, there is no 'storehouse', nor a being.

Strange though it may seem, yet it is true, that this glorious and noble outlook on life and its problems receives wonderful corroboration from the researches of modern Western Psychologists. For, the recent tendency in philosophical thought has been so marked that modern psychology is nicknamed, 'Psychology without a psyche (soul)'. Says W. S. Lily, the great Roman Catholic author: 'The existence of the immortal in man is becoming increasingly discredited under the influence of the dominant schools of modern thought. The scientists whom the nineteenth century heard most gladly have been much more affirmative in negation. The so-called "soul" they insist is a "bundle of sensations, emotions, sentiments, all relating to the physical experiences of the race and the individual"'. Wundt, the eminent psychologist, in his well-known work, tells us: "Psychology proves that not only our

sense-perception, but the memorial images depend for their origins upon the functionings of the organs of sense and movement”, and holds that a continuance of this sensuous consciousness must appear irreconcilable with the facts of experience’. Professor James, who is even more modern than Wundt, accounts the term ‘soul’ a mere figure of speech to which no reality corresponds. ‘The word’, he insists, ‘explains nothing and guarantees nothing ; its successive thoughts are the only intelligible things about it ; and definitely is as much as psychology can empirically do’.

Western science forsooth can do nothing more, but Eastern sages by psychical exercises can so develop the clairvoyant faculty that they can look into past lives. For instance, we hear the Buddha, the greatest Eastern Sage ever known to man saying:

‘I recalled my varied lot in former existences as follows: first one life, then two lives, then three, four, five, ten, twenty, up to fifty lives, then a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand, then the dissolution of many world cycles, then the evolution of many world cycles. In such a caste, such a dietary, such the pleasure and pain I experience, such my life’s end. Vanishing from there, I came into existence elsewhere. Then such was my name, such my family... etc. Thus, I recalled the many births in my former existence.

‘Ignorance was dispelled, and knowledge arose: darkness vanished, and light arose...’

(from ‘Reminiscences of Previous Births - **Pubbe-Nivāsanussati Ñāna**’).

CHAPTER V

Can We Believe in Re-birth?

Now, a question arises. Can we be sure of 'Re-birth', or, survival after death? In other words, does this accumulated energy or 'force' continue to re-manifest itself on other and various planes of consciousness, or does it cease to exist with our death?

According to the Law of Conservation of Energy and Indestructibility of Matter, it is certain that in the process called 'death' nothing is lost. The animal heat goes off somewhere in the atmosphere or in some other matter; the animal magnetism and vitality are momentarily lost sight of, but soon they will be attached to other organic beings such as plants or animals to begin a new cycle of embodiment. The physical constituents of the body will go to their appropriate places, into the air as gases, into the water as fluids, into the earth as salts and minerals, and in a short time may form the parts of a flower, or fruit, or animal.

But, where or what is the willing, the thinking, the remembering, the directing force which once controlled all these and held them together in unity?

This, as we have seen, is the life-flux (**Santati**) that continues to seek manifestation from one sphere of existence to another, as nothing can be destroyed, in keeping with the law of the conservation of energy. And, this energy is sustained and maintained by the force of Craving.

But, this force is invisible. Yes. But much that has in the past been invisible, is now made known through other processes. For instance, ultra-violet rays are invisible but show their existence through their

chemical reaction. Is it not reasonable then to assume that consciousness and memory are also able to exist invisibly in nature and volitionally show their existence through the vital and physical unity manifested by a living being? In fact, this is the revolutionary conclusion to which western men of science have now come to having weighed all the latest scientific discoveries in the realms of physiology and biology as well as psychology and psychical research.

There is, indeed, no longer forcing aside Professor Fechner's conviction that the problem is a psycho-physical problem.

Thus is established scientifically the existence in man of a subconsciousness which in the great mass of people is almost totally dormant. Hence, the shallowness and unscientific nature of the question of objectors to the Re-birth Doctrine who ask why, if we have lived before here on this planet in human body we do not remember it, must now be obvious.

However, even this objection has now been overcome by the new Science of Hypnotism. For, Albert Moll in Hypnotism, Dr. Pitre, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Bordeaux, France, Sigmund Freud, the illustrious German Psychologist, and a host of others in more recent times, have proved conclusively that many long forgotten incidents in life dating back not merely to childhood but to the moment of conception in the mother's womb, can be recalled through Hypnotism, and it has also been found reasonable to assume in the same manner that the many experiences irrupted into the normal consciousness through this process and found unaccountable are those experiences preserved in memory from a life ante-dating birth.

Three Typical Cases of Re-birth

Notwithstanding the Scientific basis for this, there have been many cases reported of people, in India particularly, recalling incidents of their previous lives. The following instances from the French Treatise by Leon Denis, entitled *Life and Destiny* would be of interest:-

‘(1) A case is related of a child at Simla (India), who remember that he was assassinated in the year 1814. His name (in his previous life) was Mr. Tucker, and he was Superintendent of the Council. The child recalled even small incidents of his life, and, taken to the place where the assassination occurred, was terror-stricken.

‘(2) In 1880, at Vera Cruz (Mexico), a seven year old child possessed the power to heal. Several people were healed by vegetables remedies prescribed by the child. When asked how he knew these things, he said that he was formerly a great doctor and his name then was Jules Alpherese. This surprising faculty developed in him at the age of four.

‘(3) The famous Roman Catholic French writer Lamartine described in his *Voyage in the Orient*, his distinct reminiscences of a far past. He says: ‘I had in Judea no Bible or chart in Hand. There was no person to give me the antique name of the valleys and mountains. Nevertheless, I at once recognised the Valley and the Battlefield of Saul! When we reached the Convent, the Fathers confirmed with exactitude my previsions... With the exception of the Valley of Lebanon, I saw scarcely any spot which was not for me like a memory. Finally, careless of what even his Roman Catholic brethren or the Fathers might say, put himself down on record in these words: ‘Have we lived two lives, or a thousand? Is not our memory but a tarnished image that the breath of God revives?’ *¹

*1. From *Ceylon lectures* (1921) by Dr. Evans-Wentz Chapter VI

To those who are willing to accept Truth wherever Truth is found, these words of a great Roman Catholic author would be of profound interest.

These are some of the salient features in the Buddha's teachings, many of which are now being confirmed from time to time by the researches of independent thinkers in the West. The Buddha makes no appeals to emotion. His appeal is to man's reason and intelligence.

The seeker after Truth would note, however, that in dealing with the great problems of birth, life and death, the Buddha's methods and approach have been different to those prevailing in our own time.

For, while today mathematics and the controlled experiments are used, the Buddha resorted to the expedient of similes and metaphors to bring home the truths He propounded to His hearers. That is the only difference between conditions obtaining 2,500 years ago and now.

CHAPTER VI

Buddhism and Science

The Truth is the same in any age, even if the methods leading to its understanding vary. And, when we consider the evidence in the light of modern science, we shall find that the results achieved have been the same.

For instance, the Buddhist view of mind and matter - phenomena - is that they are all illusions, not real. Numerous are the instances wherein the Buddha draws attention to this. **Māyā** is what He called the illusory nature of material phenomena. Whether man or beast, angel or devil, from the atom to the stars in the heavens, everything is governed by the law of 'Dependent Origination' - *Paticca-Samuppada*. When the conditions or causes cease, the object, too, cease. But the sphere of *Maya* - Illusion - is one of 'relative reality', that is to say, a thing is real on its own level, but not real in any absolute sense. For example, to the consciousness functioning on the same level, a solid is a solid exactly as it appears to us, but to the consciousness functioning on a different level, or on a different vibrational frequency, the solid would appear in a different way. It would be, as physics tells us it is, a collection of atomic particles in continual movement, held together by the electronic laws of attraction and repulsion, and so forth. Another easily understandable example would be that of light. For, while we say there is light, there are beings who see darkness where we, humans, see light. Such beings are the owls. Hence, in a word, from the Buddhist point of view the material world is one of illusion. And, it is this fundamental fact that the Buddha strives so hard to drive into the minds of His followers. Unless this basic fact of all phenomena is recognized and realized by the Seeker, he remains tied to the wheel of life, and can make no progress on the path to Liberation.

For his ignorance leads him to believe that there is form and substance when in reality there is not. And his ignorance binds him to the processes of cause and effect, and his mind continues to move like a prisoner confined within his own false constructions. He cannot get outside the orbit of his own limitations, and so cannot see the process in its entirety or understand his own nature. There is therefore, no end to suffering for one who is victim to such Delusion (**Moha**). To win one's liberation, there must be realization that relative concepts are unreal, because they are relative.

In fact, 'experiments have revealed that the whole mass of the electron was due to its electrical charge. This also proved conclusively that matter was devoid of a material substratum and paved the way for the making of the atom bomb which became a possibility once it was proved that matter was energy pure and simple. On the authority of science, therefore, we have to look upon the whole material world as an illusion in which energy masquerades in the form of matter'.

Indeed, the Buddha's views on phenomena are thus confirmed today by western science. For, whatever our senses may say, the picture presented to us through physics of the phenomenal world, is that there is no solidity, form or substance to be seen anywhere in the universe, but merely a collocation of forces in a perpetual state of flux, a momentary 'arising and passing away'. The turning point in the scientific world came when the atom was analysed, and it was found to resolve into energy - a process of transmutation from one form of radiation to another, a continual cycle of 'arising and passing away' of electronic particles. According to physics, then, solids are nothing more than events in the continuum of space and time, and material objects are mainly space. Solid itself is merely a convention of speech based on the deceptive data provided by the senses and has no basis in reality. From the electrons therefore to the stars in their heavenly courses there is nothing that is not in

motion. Immobility is only in appearance. Thus, we see, that in its own way science has helped the Buddhist cause, because the process of universal flux and its inherent substancelessness of matter are fundamentals of Buddhism. But this process of universal flux and inherent substancelness of matter have greater implications than we at first suspected. For, now, we find that man and his mind are themselves part of the causal process. Man cannot get outside it, as it were, and view phenomena objectively, because he, too, is a part of this whole illusory fabrication. In other words, the whole subject - object relationship is now brought into question.

Our conclusion then is that the phenomenal world is unreal, though on our present levels of consciousness receiving deceptive data, through the five bases or sense organs, we are led to believe that it is real. In fact, it is this unreal mind which is itself part of the illusory phenomenal world, that makes us believe in a non-existent soul - or 'ātma'.

How this happens is explained by the Buddha by reference to a ball of fire, which, when whirled rapidly, can, for a time, create the illusion of a circle. From which we see that motion can create the illusion of rest under certain circumstances and for a certain time. Therefore, everything in the Universe is **Māyā** - Illusion - a set of relations; nothing more!

The modern scientific view of the material world is thus in harmony with that of the Buddha.

Kant had actually suspected the subjectivity of space and time, but 50 years ago scientists agreed that space and time were independent realities. But Einstein has now finally revolutionised the minds of scientific men by propounding his famous Theory of Relativity. And, as if to add to the discomfiture of the theists, late in 1949, Einstein

put forward his most recent theory - the Unified Field Theory, which 'encompasses not only the boundless gravitational and electro-magnetic fields of interstellar space, but also the tiny, terrible field inside the atom'.

In the light of this enlightening theory regarding the two primordial forces, as a commentator puts it, 'the whole complex of the universe - the macrocosmos and the microcosmos will resolve into a homogeneous fabric in which matter and energy are indistinguishable and all forms of motion from the slow-wheeling of the galaxies to the wild flight of electrons become simply changes in the structure and concentration of the primordial fields'.

Here, then, is beautiful explanation of the puzzling harmony of the Cosmos without recourse to a mysterious unknown - God. The Buddha encompassed both gravitational and electro-magnetism in His Doctrine of **Anicca** - Transiency.

There is also ample proof that the corollaries which spring up as a result of Einstein's revolutionary outlook have all been anticipated by the Buddha. For, the whole universe, as we have seen, is **Māya**. After all, we identify an object by its colour, smell, taste, and so on, but these exist only in our minds and 'can no more be ascribed to the external object than can the tickling or pain caused sometimes by touching such an object'. 'Thus scientists and philosophers now agreed that the whole universe is a construction of the mind and exists only in the mind as an edifice of conventional symbols shaped by the senses of man'. Hence, if we could see 'things as they really are', the world may appear in an entirely different hue or even as one vast void.

'By mind the world is led, by mind is drawn:
And all men own the sovereignty of mind'.

From time to time in His discourses, the Buddha has compared the world to foam, a bubble or to a mirage. The unsubstantiality of matter is specifically referred to in the **Sutta Nipāta**:-

‘As void one should look upon the world
O **Mogharajā**, being ever mindful;
When he has destroyed the theory of self,
The will he overcome death’.

Now Einstein has also said that matter and mind must arise together or not at all; that, in other words, there is simultaneous genesis of matter and mind. The question then arises, ‘Who created these two illusions?’ The answer obviously is that they created each other, for no other reason, than no sane person would attempt to create an illusion and confer his imprimatur on it as perfect truth having the basis of Self.

And, Einstein says, ‘I cannot conceive of an Almighty Creator who punishes and rewards the objects of his own creation. It is a challenge to his omnipotent fairness’.

The Buddha explained the strange phenomenon of ‘self-creation’ by referring to two sticks neither of which can be made to stand upright by itself, but both of which can be made to do so if they are made to support each other.

The fact, however, that they must arise together or not at all, also makes them inseparable twins, which in turn, point to a common source. Henri Bergson has shown what that source is. For, he has explained at some length that mind is a condensation from Consciousness. He has also said that once Consciousness is present, matter can be deduced from it. In other words, Consciousness gives rise to mind and matter. And, that precisely is

what the Buddha has said: 'Consciousness (**Viññāna**) gives rise to mind (**Nāma**) and matter (**Rūpa**). Now, how would we explain this?

According to the Buddhist law of Dependent Origination (**Paticca samuppāda**), Mind (or, **nāma**) stands only for the three mental groups, viz. feeling, perception, mental-formations. Consciousness is single out, in order to show that all mental and physical life of beings is dependent on it. In other words, this means that without Consciousness (or, awareness), there can not be mental or physical phenomena, while at the same time, for there to be Consciousness, there must also be mental and physical phenomena. Hence, any state of Consciousness (or, awareness), can arise only along with its concomitant Mental phenomena, such as feeling, etc. by way of 'Co-nascence', or, simultaneous arising (**Sahajāta-paccaya**). Because Consciousness (or awareness) cannot arise and exist without feeling, and feeling cannot arise and exist without consciousness (or awareness) of it.

It is therefore true to say that through Consciousness (or, awareness) mental and physical phenomena are conditioned, while on the other hand, it is equally true to say that there can be no consciousness without mental and physical phenomena. For, there must be mental and physical phenomena present if one is to be conscious (or, aware) of them. Hence, with the arising or presence of Consciousness (or, awareness), there is mental and physical phenomena by way of 'Co-nascence', or simultaneous arising (**Sahajāta-paccaya**). This, as Bergson has explained at some length, means that 'mind is a condensation from Consciousness'. For, Mind (**nāma**) as we have seen, means the three mental groups, viz. feeling, perception, mental-formations. And, for these to arise there must be Consciousness. Hence, if Consciousness is reduced to a smaller circuit or circle, we get mind.

We now come to the next proposition made by Bergson, namely, that once Consciousness is present, Matter (or **Rūpa**) can be deduced from it. To get a clearer understanding of this let us study one of the states of Consciousness - eye-consciousness, for example. We then find that when for the first time at birth, the visual organ, the eye, begins to function, at that very first moment, of the arising of eye-consciousness, there is co-arising or simultaneous arising (**Sahajāta-paccaya**) of the sensitive visual organ. For, as long as the sensitive organ of the eye, does not yet exist, so long eye-consciousness does not arise. Hence, if eye-consciousness is present, the sensitive organ of the eye has also arisen.

A further explanation here, however, would not be out of place. During life there is difference. For, during life, Consciousness is a later-arising condition dependent on the already arisen (**Rūpa**) physical phenomena, as the sensitive organ of the eye may be present without eye-consciousness, when, for example, another sense-organ like the ear, is functioning. Hence, during life, Consciousness forms merely a prop and support for the upkeep of the body. In as much as the feeling of hunger is a condition for the feeding and upkeep of this already arisen body, so, too, by its later-arising, Consciousness is condition and support to this already arisen body. For, if Consciousness would arise no more, the physical organs would gradually cease their functioning, lose their faculties, and the body would die.

From which we see that for Consciousness to arise there must be the 'Co-nascence', or, simultaneous arising of feeling, perception, etc., because Consciousness and all its mental concomitants are inseparably bound up together and mutually dependent upon one another. And, as long as these mutually support and depend on each other, the body beings fed through the sense-organs, continues to live.

We have, however, not discussed another important question that arises, namely, that mental phenomena, such as feeling, perception, and so on, cannot arise without physical bases, or sense-organs. How, then do the sense-organs arise?

According to Buddhism, the four characteristics of matter, viz. cohesion, extension, heat and motion, are to any one of the five bases or sense-organs, at the very moment of their first coming into existence, a condition by way of simultaneous-arising (**Sahajāta-paccaya**); during life these four physical characteristics are to five bases, or sense-organs, a condition by way of Foundation (**Nissaya**), on which the sense-organs are entirely dependent. Furthermore, the physical phenomenon 'Vitality', or, **rūpa-jivit'indriya**, is a necessary condition by way of its 'presence' for the arising of the five bases, or sense-organs. In other words, for the five Bases, or sense-organs to exist there must be Physical life which depends on 'Vitality', without which the five Bases or sense-organs, could not arise and exist. The five sense-organs can also exist only as long as they get their necessary nutriment (**āhāra**) through the presence of physical phenomena. *1

Buddhism thus proves conclusively what Bergson perhaps merely surmised, namely, that 'once Consciousness is present, *matter* can be deduced from it'.

Thus, we see, that both modern science and philosophy have arrived at the stage where 'Consciousness gives rise to mind (**Nāma**) and matter (**Rūpa**). But the Buddha goes further, to the root of the matter, and in explaining the Law of Dependent Origination - **Paticca-Samuppāda** - shows how Consciousness (**Viññāna**) is derived from **Sankhāras** (**karma**-formations), and how **Sankhāras** (**kamma**-formations) arise from Ignorance (**Avijjā**).

*1 condensed from word of the Buddha by Nyanatiloka

What applies to mind and matter must also apply to object and observer. But, matter and mind, we know, are unreal. Hence, object and the observer are both unreal because they have no separate existence. The correct view of the world then is that the world itself is real enough, but it is only a set of relations. These relations are the building blocks of the universe, and are explained in detail in **Patthāna** (the last of the great works on the **Abhi-Dhamma** - Buddhist Psychology).

The Law of Dependent Origination (**Paticca-Samuppāda**) arose from the Orient, and was the fruit of long struggle, experience and research carried out by the Bodhisattva (i.e. Aspirant to Bodhi or Enlightenment), as he struggled from existence and existence seeking Perfection. In His final birth He attained Full Enlightenment and became a Samma-Sambuddha. That was 2,500 years ago. The Doctrine was first preached to only five persons, who were at one time His erstwhile companions and, later on, after their conversion by Him, became His first disciples. Today there are over 500,000,000 disciples, comprising the Buddhist world.

This great Doctrine now appears to find an almost parallel in the West, in the Theory of Relativity and the Unified Field Theory propounded by Einstein in 1949. Thus Einstein becomes one of the greatest scientists of our time, even though he has not completely solved the whole problem of manifest existence.

CHAPTER VII

Buddhism Solves the Riddle of Life

In the foregoing chapter we have seen probably the limits to which western science can go in its examination of phenomena; it appears to have come to rock bottom in its analysis of physical phenomena. For, while theories are propounded, and even held to be true, western men of science are unable to tell us how we are to find out whether what they propound is true. For, man and his mind, as we have seen, are also part of the phenomenal process. And, any attempt he makes with his present mind, to examine phenomena, would be as if he were trying to look at that with which he is himself identified. For instance, when the mind registers an impression which seems to say that we are seeing an object, can we be sure that what we see is indeed an object? Or, that we are seeing something that has even a close resemblance to what we think we see?

Science can give no assurance herein. But Buddhism can meet the Atomic Challenge, because the supramundane knowledge of Buddhism begins where science leaves off. And this is clear enough to anyone who has made a study of Buddhism. For, though Buddhist Meditation, the atomic constituents making up matter have been seen and felt, and the sorrow, or unsatisfactoriness (or, **Dukkha**), of their 'arising and passing away' (dependent on causes) has made itself known to the mind which has stopped identifying itself with what we call a 'soul' or '**ātma**' - the illusion of **Sakkāyadiṭṭhi**, it is called in the Buddha's teaching.

If through Buddhist Meditation the process of 'arising and passing away' of the atomic constituents of matter have been seen, even so long ago as 2,500 years ago, it must now be clear that the Buddha Dhamma is based upon the direct perception of ultimate

Truth; and it is only natural that the discoveries of science can merely confirm it as they are doing today.

Now, what is the solution to the problem of manifest existence, and how are we to discover the Truth ourselves and see things as they truly are, face to face, as it were? The Buddha, in His great compassion, asks us to develop a transcendental mind; that is to say, a mind which is outside the causal process. And then, He says, we too would be able to view the whole universe objectively, from outside, as it were!

When we ourselves develop such a mind, recognising the fleeting nature of phenomenal existence in the realms of Beings and Becoming, there will arise in our minds a feeling of Repulsion - **Nibbida** - for such continued manifestation. And the Buddha says the development of such a mind is possible in every way.

For there are already three types of beings known to Buddhists who have developed such a Mind: these are, a **Sammā-Sambuddha** (i.e. a Fully-Enlightened Being like our Buddha Himself), a **Pacceka Buddha** (i.e. a Silent Buddha), an **Arahat** (i.e. one who has realized the Doctrine himself through the aid of a Buddha's teaching).

That such a state of mind can be attained is the teaching of the Supreme Buddha. In His dispensation, that state of Supramundane Consciousness which is outside the realms of causal processes is called **Nibbāna**. In the **Itivuttaka** the Buddha referring to **Nibbāna** as the Goal of ultimate human understanding and striving, outside all causal states free and unfettered, says:-

‘There is, O Bhikkhus, an Unborn (**Ajāta**), Unoriginated (**Abhūta**), Unmade (**Akata**) and Non-conditioned

(**Asaṅkhata**). If O Bhikkhus, there were not this Unborn, Unoriginated, Unmade, and Non-conditioned, an escape from the born, originated, made and conditioned, would not be possible here. As there is, O Bhikkhus, an Unborn, Unoriginated, Unmade, and Non-conditioned, an escape from the born, originated, made, conditioned is possible’.

The being who has attained to such a state of Mind can live on, viewing phenomena objectively. And, usually he does so for the good and welfare of other beings. In time, when the force of energy that propelled him onto that final state of human existence is ultimately exhausted, he dies to that state. But, unlike his earlier incarnations, he is now not re-born onto any of the several planes of cognition, as Craving which gives rise to further manifestation, has been firmly rooted out. For, when all Craving ceases, the laws of ‘attraction and repulsion’ that give rise to a new being through the grasping of a new germ, are no longer set in motion. Nothing however, is annihilated in the process. But, what we have all the time been conventionally calling a ‘being’ does not arise again. Sir Edwin Arnold, describing that final cessation from the recurring cycles of birth and death, says in his *Light of Asia*:

If any teach **Nibbāna** is to cease,
Say unto such they lie;
If any teach **Nibbāna** is to live,
Say unto such they err.

The continuity alone is broken. For, the four characteristics of matter - cohesion, extension, heat and motion - do not come together to provide a foundation (**Nissaya**) for future manifestation. These must always co-exist (even if one predominates over the others) to provide a foundation for phenomenal manifestation. They cannot exist separately, according to Buddhism. That ultimate state where

there is no phenomenal manifestation, also called **Pari-Nibbāna**, is attained at death, only by one who has previously reached the state of **Nibbāna** (Non-Craving).

Now, it will be interesting to ask ourselves whether such a state, where there is neither annihilation on the one hand, nor existence on the other, yet a 'state', in contra-distinction to any known physical (mundane) form, is, in any way, possible of attainment? Sceptics may perhaps say that it is merely a theory - an empty dream - and, to such the story we have narrated earlier concerning the silly fish and the turtle might well apply.

Looking at the prospects before us, however, in the light of modern atomic discoveries, we find that **Nibbāna** is indeed, the only real state. For, **Nibbāna** involves the absence of cohesion, extension, heat and motion. And, interpreting temperatures as the intensity of thermal motion, scientists too have been led to conclude that there should be such a 'state' at a lowest possible - 'the absolute zero' temperature where molecular motion is said to stop entirely. Using thermo-dynamics for our arguments too we can come to a similar conclusion, at least in theory, and postulate that under certain circumstances, motion stops entirely. That is the Buddhist point too. Hence, scientifically speaking a 'state' equivalent to **Nibbāna** is in every way possible of attainment. For, if one characteristic of matter, say motion, is absent, the others too cannot exist. But the western approach to the problem does not go beyond the realm of theory, and is only hypothetical - does not 'deliver the goods'. And, at best, for all practical purposes, merely leads to the appearance of the constituents of matter in different forms. A clear illustration of this being found in respect of certain substances, which at high boiling points, turn into gases, and tend towards unlimited expansion, which might reach - even infinity. Matter does not disappear altogether. In fact, if it did, we would all disappear from

the scene and the measuring instruments too, and there would be none to watch the proceedings and live to tell the tale. Indeed, violence will have been done to the laws of Science whereby matter can neither be created nor destroyed. For, one cannot work against physical laws and the western approach is doomed to failure from the start.

However, we know that the constituents of matter provide a base or foundation (**Nissaya**) for phenomenal manifestation. Many religious systems have evolved high-sounding theories, beginning with 'faith in God' and ending there too. But none have told us how to remove the foundation - how to stop the process of Becoming. For, they have not realized that 'faith in God', beautiful though it is, is no permanent remedy for the evil existence, for the roots of the evil lie deeper. The child may find security in its mother's arms and be perfectly happy there. Even so, the child-mind may take refuge in the bosom of deities and find comfort therein. But does the child know aught of its mother's sorrows and difficulties? Hardly, for she moves in a world that the child cannot understand. Does the child-mind know aught of sorrow, and difficulties deities have to contend with in managing, so to speak, their little 'worlds'? Hardly, for they move in worlds that the undeveloped mind cannot comprehend. Hence, if we are to find 'peace that passeth all understanding', as adults among religionists, we must find a Way to stop birth which is the prelude to old-age, disease and death: the foundation upon which phenomenal manifestation is built must be removed. Only then, would we be able to say:

O house-builder! (i.e. Craving) you are seen,
You shall build no house again.
All your rafters (i.e. passions) are broken,
Your ridge-pole (i.e. Ignorance) is shattered,
The Unconditioned has been attained.

(Dhammapada).

To this day scientists are, as we have seen, groping in the dark - unable to help us attain to the Unconditioned state.

Buddhism alone says the feat can be performed. The riddle of Existence can be solved. Birth can be stopped, - not by destroying matter universally, but by stopping the constituents of matter coming together to provide a foundation for what we call phenomenal manifestation. This accomplished by stopping motion, not as scientists are trying to do, from outside the atom or molecule, but from inside, - from within, so to speak! It is 'a-splitting' of the atom in the Metaphysical sense. For, when motion stops entirely, matter ceases to exist. That is the Buddhist view. And, no phenomenal manifestation is possible (as this depends on the constituents of matter in some form or other).

However, as we have seen, in keeping with the development of knowledge in His time, the Buddha did not use the scientific jargon of today. He explained His doctrines in different ways - mainly in relation to law of **Kamma** (i.e. Action) which operates through the force of Craving. He proves how true they were on the anvil of realization. For, said the Buddha, where there is Craving, there will always be burning (heat) and a tendency to expand and to grasp, and so, as we understand the problem, the laws of 'attraction and repulsion' (which beget motion) will begin to function bringing together the molecules in varying combinations, which, as of yore, are referred to even today, as phenomenal manifestation, - the release of such force being directed onto the several planes of cognition like a spinning top that is wafted hither and thither, not through the propulsion of an External Agency, or God, as some imagine, but by its own kinetic energy generated through Craving for pleasures now here, now there, on the vast ocean of **Samsāra**. Here then is a scientific explanation to the perpetual cycle of birth and death, - this unceasing revolution. For, where there is motion,

there will always be the other characteristics of matter to provide a foundation for Consciousness, which in its ultimate expansion through 'heat' generated at one-pointedness of mind, may through its intensity reach - even infinity, in much the same manner that some types of nuclear energy produced through, say a pound of helium, is able to run a 100-watt electric bulb for so long a time as 13,000,000 years. For, as we have said earlier, human or other physical forms are merely the vessels or receptacles (like bulbs) that hold the energy generated through various forms of Craving. Accordingly, we find the life-span in certain celestial worlds extending from 9,000,000 years to aeons of time - which, on the same analogy, do not seem to be impossible of attainment. These are the 'divine' states that mislead some of us into believing in 'Eternal' heavens, - Eternity!

This 'going' higher and higher into 'divine' or celestial regions, on the analogy of atoms may be likened to the behaviour of certain electrons that do big 'jumps' under certain circumstances and find a way deeper and deeper into the interior of the atom, emitting as they speed along bright rays of light in various forms of radiation from the surplus energy that has been let loose. For, we are told the certain highly placed 'divine' beings (i.e. **Brahmas**) who are reborn or 'jump', so to speak, into such exalted states through development of Meditation, radiate strong rays of light which are too powerful for ordinary beings to behold. Similarly, in the lower 'divine' states of godlings (i.e. **Devas**) wherein meditation has not been developed to a high degree of potency, the rays of light emitted are not so bright and the beings themselves can be seen under certain conditions. This difference too can be understood on the same analogy, for we are told that when the 'jump' of electrons is small into what may be likened to the atomic 'suburb', the energy let loose not being so powerful, the radiation appears in the form of 'visible light', - thus establishing a relationship, as it were, between

the microcosm and the macrocosm! Here then is perhaps a scientific explanation to the dazzling spectacle which, we are told, accompanies the appearance among human beings of certain highly placed celestial beings, as recorded in the Scriptures of almost every Creed.

Yet, though some of us who are in the vanguard of humanity may reach such points-states of 'Cosmic Consciousness', they are called, - it does not lead to the 'Boundless Security' associated with **Nibbāna**. For, the process of creation, of reproduction, goes on indefinitely. Relatively-speaking, we will not be a whit further than we were at the outset of our endeavours: we will still be where we were before. For, to the Buddhist, desire in all its aspects, whether human or divine, cannot but be productive of Suffering. The process of Becoming is still kept going, ever and anon, owing to Wrong Effort.

Here, then, on the analogy of the controlled experiment, where different substances, as conditions change, sometimes appear as solids, liquids and gases, we also see how sentient 'beings' have the inherent capacity to appear in varying forms of manifestation for varying periods of time. That also explains the fundamental difference between the Buddha's teachings and all other religious systems, which for their Goal seek expansion and 'absorption in an universal **Paramatma**'.

The ultimate aim of the Buddha's doctrines is not to lead humanity to such 'divine' states. Buddhism seeks to prevent the constituents of matter coming together to provide a foundation for phenomenal manifestation. This is accomplished, not merely in theory, by seeking to destroy or 'squeeze-out' matter, in any way, as western scientists are striving so hard to achieve at high and low temperatures in their laboratories and with their test tubes, but in a practical way. The

Unconditioned is attained through Right-Effort. For, though Right-Effort which depends on Right-views (which are Steps along the Noble Eightfold Path), when the force of Craving that leads to grasping and continued manifestation, and (formerly) set the laws of 'attraction and repulsion' in motion towards states of expanding Consciousness, is neutralised, no new 'being' arises: the two forces 'interlock', as it were! No offence is done to the laws of Science. Nothing is destroyed. **Nibbāna** remains.

The failure of scientists to provide such a Way to Freedom is mainly due to their being immersed in materialistic theories: this equally applies to other religionists. Thus the Buddha alone among Gods and Men, in bestowing upon mankind the knowledge of how to withdraw from between the pincers of Good and Evil, of God and Devil, of Criss and Cross, and attain to the Unconditioned without offending physical laws, becomes the Physician-cum-Scientist par excellence of all time! Indeed, on reason alone, we should imagine there is a Way.

Pregnant with meaning, therefore, are His words as recorded in the **Saṃyutta Nikāya**:-

'When in deep, silent hours of thought,
To the Truth the holy sage attains;
Then is he free from joy and pain,
From the form and the formless.
Where water, earth, heat, air no footing found,
There burns no lighting stars, nor shines the sun,
The moon sheds not her radiant beams,
But the home of darkness is not there'.

(*Kindred Sayings*).

Unless we, too, develop a transcendental mind, therefore, (i.e. the

mind of a **Sammā-Sambuddha, Pacceka-Buddha** or **Arahat**), we shall, owing to Delusion (**Avijjā**), continue our evolutionary pursuits filled with craving for sensual and sensuous pleasures; and, as a natural result, we shall live but to suffer, entangling ourselves more and more in the process of Becoming.

The Buddha Dhamma provides us with a way of attaining that state of Nibbanic freedom from sorrow, whence we, like the Buddha and His Arahats, need never emerge again. For, though Buddhist Meditation, recognizing first, the Four Noble Truths, namely, (1) The Noble Truth of Suffering, (2) The Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering, (3) The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering, and (4) The Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering, we gradually enter upon the Noble Eightfold Path, and are progressively brought from Illusoriness to Reality.

Thus, the wise man renounces evolutionary progress centring all his efforts upon withdrawing from the evolutionary currents in which all beings are swept onward. And, when Delusion (**Avijjā**) has disappeared and Wisdom has arisen, he heaps up neither meritorious nor demeritorious, nor imperturbable **Kamma**-formations. 'Thus, through training and discipline, there is the entire fading away and extinction of this Delusion (**Avijjā**), and through the entire fading away and extinction of this Delusion, are extinguished the **Kamma**-formations. Through the extinction of the **Kamma**-formations, "Consciousness" (re-birth) is extinguished. Through the extinction of Consciousness the "Mental and Physical Existence" is extinguished. Through the extinction of the Mental and Physical Existence, the Six "Sense Organs" are extinguished. Through the extinction of the Six Sense Organs, "Sensorial Impression" are extinguished. Through the extinction of Sensorial Impression, "Feeling" is extinguished. Through the extinction of Feeling, "Craving" is extinguished. Through the extinction of Craving,

“Clinging” is extinguished. Through the extinction of Clinging, the “Process of Becoming”, is extinguished. Through the extinction of the Process of Becoming, “Re-birth” is extinguished. Through the extinction of Re-birth, “Decay and Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and Despair” are extinguished. Thus takes place the extinction of this whole mass of Suffering’.

‘Truly’, says the Buddha, ‘because beings obstructed by delusion (**Avijjā**), and ensnared by craving (**taṇhā**), now here, now there, seek ever fresh delight, therefore does there continually come to be fresh re-birth’.

‘I proclaim’, says the Buddha, ‘that everything experienced by the senses is sorrow. But why? Because one in sorrow craves to be happy, and the so-called happy one craves to be happier still. So insatiate is worldly happiness’.

From this brief analysis it will be seen that any attempt to interpret nature in terms of anthropomorphic concepts of our own creation and imagination is futile. For matter and mind, and, in fact, everything in the universe, is illusion - **Māyā** - dependent on a set of relations. And if matter and mind are themselves illusions, would not the belief in a Master-Mind as the Unknown Hand behind all phenomena be a Greater Illusion?

Not uncaused and casually, therefore, nor by the *fiat* of some Omnipotent Deity did events happen, painful or otherwise, not as Job and the Psalmist taught ‘God distributeth sorrows in his anger. For, God is a righteous judge, and God is angry every day’. Events came impelled by preceding conditions, causes that man could by intelligence and goodwill, study and govern, suspend or intensify.

Viewed thus, those great teachers of humanity who have

propounded eternal heavens, omnipotent deities, and unchanging soul in an ever-changing process of flux (which is not the same even for two consecutive moments), however well-intentioned and sincere they might have been, are now seen not to have been endowed with any deeper insight into the real laws of nature than the most ignorant of their contemporaries, and their claim to be divinely inspired by God, not being supported by any evidence whatever, appears to be no more than a hallucination. And the whole concept of divine revelation is seriously undermined.

Thus while theistic creeds are unable to withstand the onslaughts of Science and are, one by one disintegrating like badly shuffled packs of cards, with their unenlightened adherents precariously hanging on to the debris, the teachings of the Supreme Buddha remain untouched, and are seen to be the only hope in a despairing world that is torn with strife and warfare, and threatened, even at this very moment, by the forces of irreligion on the one hand, and annihilation through atomic destruction on the other.

It may, however, be impossible for most of us to visualise a world of relations and we insist on looking for a Creator. In that case, instead of scanning the heavens for a heavenly Creator, should we not accept the Supreme Buddha's advice and look nearer home for an answer to the riddle of life? If we do this, we would soon see that the material world is, as the Buddha has said, nothing more than a construction of the consciousness. And, it is this that led Eddington to say: 'We have found a strange footprint on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories to account for its origin. At last we have reconstructed the creature that made the footprint. And lo! It is our own'.

Men are free to exercise their reason with regard to all teachings. Hence, it is to the glory of the Buddha, that He allows His followers

freedom, boundless as the free sky above, which practically makes every man's own reason, the ultimate standard of his belief. In testimony of this are His own words in the Kalama Sutta: 'For this I taught you, not to believe merely because you have heard; but when you believe of you own consciousness, then to act according and abundantly'.

Buddhism comprises not with False Views. At the same time, no one is compelled to believe blindly; no one is coerced. There are no burning at the stake; no threats of eternal damnation!

Long is the night to him who is awake,
Long is the road to him who is weary;
Long is the **Samsara** to the foolish, who know not the
Sublime Truth.

(Dhammapada).





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